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# ***JPRS Report***

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## **Soviet Union**

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***Political Affairs***

# Soviet Union

## Political Affairs

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**Uzbek CP CC Criticizes Agricultural, Trade, Service Restructuring**

18200281a Tashkent PRAVDA VOSTOKA in Russian  
9 Jul 88 pp 1, 2

[Unattributed Article: "In the Uzbekistan Communist Party Central Committee; On Urgent Measures for Implementing the Decisions of the 19th All-Union CPSU Conference"]

[Text] The Uzbekistan CP Central Committee has adopted the resolution "On Urgent Measures for Implementing the Decisions of the 19th All-Union CPSU Conference." It notes that the 19th All-Union CPSU Conference has become a major event which has great historical significance for the fate of the country. The conference has reflected a new political atmosphere, a new level of democracy achieved by the party and by all of Soviet society in the period which has elapsed since the April (1985) CPSU Central Committee Plenum. A programmed political position has been worked out on all the basic questions which were the subject of the general party and public discussion based on the Theses of the CPSU Central Committee. The conference gave clear answers to the question of how to ensure the intensification of perestroika and to guarantee its irreversibility, and defined specific tasks for strengthening the role of the party as the political avant-garde of society.

It was pointed out at the conference that perestroika will take on true value in the eyes of the people only when it bears real fruit in the daily life of each family. Particularly stressed was the need for the quickest possible solution to one of the most difficult questions—the food question.

The Uzbek SSR was criticized for stagnation in agriculture. The per capita level of food product consumption, as before, significantly lags behind the all-union indicator. The central and local agencies receive numerous complaints from workers regarding the interruptions in supply of meat-dairy products and fruits and vegetables, and the high market prices.

In the situation which has arisen, the Central Committee Buro considers it necessary to concentrate its main efforts on solving the food problem and to present the development of agriculture as the immediate primary task. Comrades G. Kh. Kadyrov, V. A. Antonov, and I. Kh. Dzhurabekov, with participation of the appropriate republic and local agencies and scientific organizations, have been assigned the task of implementing day-to-day control over the course of realization of the developed measures on increasing production and improving supply of food products to the population. These measures must be based on various forms of contracts and rentals, the creation of a network of cooperatives, and the improvement of transport, processing, storage and sale of farm produce.

The republic's party, Soviet and economic management organs must ensure the harvesting of the farm crop within an abbreviated time and without losses, keeping in mind the fact that the successful implementation of the harvesting campaign is the most important factor in solving the food problem.

A Plenum of the Uzbekistan CP Central Committee must be convened at the end of August of this year to review the question of the course of implementation of the Food Program. The task of preparing the materials for the Plenum will be assigned to comrades V. P. Anishchev, V. A. Antonov, V. I. Ogarek, I. Kh. Dzhurabekov, and I. I. Iskanderov.

Despite the measures which have been taken, there has been no radical breakthrough in the matter of production, expansion of the assortment, or improvement of the quality of consumer goods. Many party and Soviet agencies and economic management organizations are taking their time and exhibiting political shortsightedness. Considering the situation which has arisen in this sector, the Central Committee Buro directs comrades A. S. Ikramov, V. I. Ogarek, and A. R. Atadzhanov, with the participation of managers of the appropriate republic and oblast agencies, to immediately review and outline a set of supplemental measures aimed at increasing the volume and improving the quality of consumer goods, and making broader use of local resources, capacities of the cooperative movement, and individual trade activity. They are also to consolidate all the different measures and plans which exist on this question, compile a unified program, and ensure strict control over its implementation.

Particular attention should be given to the questions raised at the conference in connection with the implementation of radical economic reform. It is proceeding at an extremely slow pace in the republic, and the national economy in many ways is continuing to develop along the extensive path. Plans for increasing the national income and resource conservation, and for the introduction of achievements in national-technical progress, are not being fulfilled. Comrades G. Kh. Kadyrov and I. I. Iskanderov must complete the formulation of the new economic mechanism. Working together with the ministries and enterprise managers, they must decisively overcome the levelling in the labor wage and sharply intensify the interest of people in attaining better end results.

The situation in capital construction remains complex. The plan for introduction of fixed capital and new production capacities is being undermined. The implementation of the housing program is not being ensured, primarily due to the lagging behind of housing-construction cooperation and the construction of individual housing. The implementation of the social and production program is also inhibited by the lagging behind of the construction industry's material-technical base.

Comrades V. N. Lobko, K. Kh. Makhamadaliyev, I. I. Iskanderov, and T. Ya. Sharipov must once again carefully study the volumes of capital construction for 1989-1990 and seek out additional possibilities for allocating funds and local resources for increasing the construction of housing and facilities in the social sphere, especially in rural areas, as well as funds for the leading development of the material-technical base of the building complex.

Workers continue to complain about the serious shortcomings in the work of the housing-municipal management and city transport, and especially about the interruptions in heat and water supply, the low quality of repair and technical maintenance of housing, and the constant disruptions in operating schedules of buses, trolleys, and streetcars.

Comrade V. N. Lobko, as well as Karakalpak ASSR Council of Ministers Chairman D. S. Yadgarov, the oblsposkom chairmen, UzSSR Minister of Housing and Municipal Services V. K. Mikhaylov, and Tashgorisposkom Chairman Sh. R. Mirsaidov will be assigned the task of organizing the effective elimination of shortcomings in housing and municipal services and preparing them immediately for normal operation in the fall-winter period of 1988-1989. In a month's time they must review all letters and complaints about municipal and transport services and take measures for drastically improving work in these sectors.

The party committees for organization of trade and consumer services are working without the necessary depth and persistence, and largely in a formal manner. As before, interruptions in the sale of goods in sufficient assortment are allowed in certain regions. Trade does not know how to effectively react to the changes in demand for certain goods. The buying fever on salt, matches, and soap which arose recently in Tashkent illuminated the helplessness of certain Soviet and economic managers in the face of the emerging problems.

As yet we have still been unable to fully activate the material-technical potential of the republic's machine building and agro-industrial complexes and the transport, communication and construction enterprises toward developing paid consumer services. The public receives 1/4 the amount of public health services, 1/5 the consumer services, and 5/12 of the cultural services as compared with the rational standards. Shoe repair services, repair of major appliances, and dry cleaning services are among those which are difficult to obtain. All this leads to the creation of waiting lines and gives rise to public dissatisfaction.

Over 2,000 population centers in the republic do not have stationary trade enterprises, and 1,500 have no consumer services facilities. One-third of the tailor shops, workshops, and consumer services receiving centers are located in buildings which have been adapted to this purpose. Nevertheless, due to the departmental

approaches and negligence of the local Soviet ispolkoms, the consumer services facilities continue to be transferred over to the administrative services.

Comrade V. P. Anishchev, in conjunction with the Ministry of Trade and Uzbekbriyash [not further expanded], must take immediate measures to bring about order in trade. These must include: examining the possibility of expanding its network, seeking out possibilities for uninterrupted supply and timely delivery of goods of sufficient quantity for trade, organizing the necessary work with the labor collectives of the trade enterprises for eliminating waiting lines to buy goods of sufficient grouping. The questions of improving consumer services must be reviewed within the party and Soviet agencies.

Comrades M. Kh. Khalmukhamedov and S. U. Sultanova must be charged with the task of examining and implementing a set of first-priority measures on radically improving the operation of social provision, primarily the institutions of public health and education. They must organize work on bringing to order all the general education schools in the republic by the new school year.

The Commission on Party Control under the Uzbekistan CP Central Committee and the UzSSR Committee on People's Control, working together with the Komsomol, trade union, and other public organizations, must bring about systematic control over the realization of the party's social policy as developed by the 27th CPSU Congress. They must increase the degree of personal answerability of the party, Soviet and economic management organs and their managers for maintaining strict order in the distribution of funds of industrial and food products and their realization, and for fulfilling the established tasks on expanding the production of consumer goods and rendering consumer, municipal and other services to the public.

Comrade P. V. Dogonkin and the first secretaries of the party obkoms must be charged with developing the active work of the delegates to the CPSU 19th All-Union Conference within the primary party organizations and labor collectives for the purpose of bringing its results and decisions to each communist and every republic resident. For this purpose, they must hold conferences, organize meetings and informal talks of conference delegates with the workers, and give presentations on the pages of the republic and oblast newspapers, on television and radio.

Comrade M. Kh. Khalmukhamedov must effectively organize broad propaganda of party conference materials, making comprehensive use of the means of mass information and propaganda, the lecturer and mass-agitation aktiv, the public organizations, and especially the leaders of culture, literature and art and the members of the artists unions for this purpose. Propaganda and



explanation of conference documents must be conducted in direct connection with the current problems of the republic's economic, social and political life.

The Uzbekistan CP Central Committee stresses that the party obkoms, the party organizations, the Karakalpak ASSR Council of Ministers, the oblispolkoms, Soviet and state agencies, and the public organizations must, without waiting for directives, already now begin active realization of the decisions associated with the solution of the current problems in increasing the public welfare and in meeting the priority demands of the public.

We must direct the organizational and political work of the party organizations toward increasing the labor and socio-political activity of the communists and their avant-garde role in the struggle for perestroika. We must see that every CPSU member is indeed a political fighter of the party, an organizer of the masses in implementing the outlined program of revolutionary transformation of society.

The course of implementation of the current resolution must be examined monthly at the Uzbekistan CP Central Committee Secretariat. Control should be assigned to Central Committee Second Secretary V. P. Anishchev, the party organization work department, and the party control commission.

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#### **PRAVDA Scores Kirghiz Council of Ministers**

18300332 Moscow PRAVDA in Russian 17 Jun 88 p 2

[Article by PRAVDA correspondent Yu. Razgulyayev under the rubric "In Preparation for the 19th All-Union Party Conference": "A Statement to the Government: Why the Republic Council Of Ministers Is Not Using its Power to the Limit"; first paragraph is source introduction]

[Text] The "big council of ministers," as they call a full assembly of all the members of the republic's government, meets once a quarter. There, they discuss the most important, the biggest questions, the ones that fundamentally influence the life and development of the region. According to the Constitution, the Council of Ministers is the supreme administrative and executive organ. It holds in its hands all the threads which run from the ministries and departments to the cities and villages, to the plants and kolkhozes, to the inhabitants of the republic. These links are intersected by other ones—on the level of the local soviets of peoples deputies. If they come together at the necessary point, then collectives work rhythmically, hospitals and schools are built, store shelves are kept full. When the links do not coincide, then plans go wrong and peoples' lives are complicated. It is specifically the government of the republic which is charged with ensuring the smooth functioning of this entire complicated system, with "tuning" the mechanism of a multi-sectoral economy.

...Here, everything is as it is at an ordinary session. Only the presidium is not big—the chairman of the government and his deputies. But in the seats, there are the ministers, the chairmen of state committees, the chairman of oblast executive committees. They are holding council...

The Gosplan chairman, S. Begaliyev, reports the first-quarter results in the republic's economy.

"The rates of development of the national economy have become more stable... National income is growing more quickly than outlined in the plan... Quotas for industrial production and agricultural purchases have been over-fulfilled..."

The chairman of the Council of Ministers, A. Dzhumagulov, interrupts the speaker (this is allowed here—after all, this is a business session, not a ceremonial one):

"Those present are already acquainted with the figures. Let us rather analyze the reasons for the break-downs. The plan for completion of new housing has again not been fulfilled. Twenty-eight enterprises have failed to meet delivery contracts. Five new banks have been established, but the financial situation of the sectors is getting worse... What lies at the root of our failures?"

Some from the tribune, some from the floor, the ministers and oblast leaders enter into a difficult discussion. Time and again, heated arguments erupt, rebukes and suggestions can be heard. There is a clash of interests here, behind which lie the long lines in the food stores, the lists of applications for apartments, and other social and economic problems whose solution the citizens of the republic expect from their government...

During the past two or three years, there has been a turnover of probably more than half of the former Council of Ministers membership. The composition of the government and of the executive committee chairmen has also markedly changed. The style of work is also becoming different: undoubtedly, there was more noise, pressure, and threat before, and, clearly, there was not enough thorough analysis and realistic assessment of the relationship between costs and results. Thus, at the first session of the republic Supreme Soviet of the present, 11th, convocation, the former head of the government, A. Duysheyev, proudly reported that "serious positive shifts are occurring" in housing construction within the Kirghiz SSR. Millions of square meters and thousands of new housing units were cited. But when the new government membership compared these "achievements" with real requirements, it turned out that, with such rates, people will have to wait decades for an apartment.

They used to love to talk here also about the high development of animal husbandry, about the Kirghiz SSR occupying third place in the country for sheep breeding. But, at the same time, the population's consumption of meat was also practically the lowest in the

USSR. And this was certainly not because, as some maintained, "the republic is feeding the country:" deliveries to the all-union fund did not increase at all, amounting to, as, incidentally, they do at present, the percentages which had been projected. The entire matter derived from the level of economic management, which also manifested itself in the social sphere. Whole dozens, hundreds of villages are living without water systems, there are regions without a single standard hospital or a real, not an "adapted" school. All this was bequeathed to the present government and its ministers, to whom people have entrusted the most complex of jobs—to lead the republic out of stagnation.

Have they succeeded in changing anything during these three years?

First of all, A. Dzhumagulov thinks, the approach itself to the solution of social and economic problems is changing.

"While 'gross output' and increases accomplished above the already 'achieved' levels were earlier at the center of attention, now the criterion is a different one: the speed with which we are approaching solution of our most pressing problems.

"Let us take, for example, the production of meat. During the past two five-year plans, meat consumption grew a total of two kilograms per capita of the population. And during the past two years alone, the increase has amounted to 4 kilograms. The gap behind the average all-union level is still great, but an improvement is present. For milk, these same data come to 8 and 55 kilograms.

"One after another, we, along with the Chairman of the Council of Ministers, have turned to the line-items in the plan and have compared the figures. There is an increase for certain directions but, for the moment, we are unable to put any kind of large-scale, final program into action. People, it must be said directly, do not sense any special changes. Shortages of clothing, footwear, and furniture are being reduced slowly. The 'housing' problem, which almost 40 percent of the letters to the Council of Ministers 'shout' about and about which a great number of complaints are made to oblast party and executive committees and to the editors of newspapers and magazines, continues to be a particularly urgent one. The republic is completing more than 2 million square meters each year, but the line is growing practically no shorter. Moreover, when we read through the 'Housing' program to the year 1992, it became evident that, during the 13th Five-Year Plan, there will even be an increase in the number of people who are waiting in line for apartments."

Why is the mechanism of authority spinning its wheels in such questions?

The Theses of the CPSU Central Committee set the task of "returning to the soviets real powers of authority, having transferred to them the examination and consideration of all concrete questions of state, economic, and social and cultural life, without exception." It is stated in principle that party organs should not substitute for the organs of state administration. But the republic Council of Ministers is feeling pressure here from its neighbor in the seven-story building, a striving by the Kirghiz CP Central Committee, and particularly its departments, to interfere in the work of the government. Nothing but joint resolutions have any worth! Up to two hundred of them are passed a year concerning the most varied questions, most frequently economic ones. But there is another side to the "coin" here: are the members of the governments themselves making full use of their own power?

I recall how, about two years ago, at a session of the Central Committee Bureau, a discussion began concerning the allocation of land to city dwellers for dacha plots and private construction. The complexity of the problem lay in the fact that both Frunze and other cities are surrounded, as they say, right up to the front porch, by the fields belonging to kolkhozes and sovkhozes, and allocations can only be cut out of these.

The first to complain were representatives of the state agro-industrial complex:

"We will not permit the squandering of state land!"

An attempt was made to argue with them: perhaps personal farms will provide more products than some low-profit and sometimes even unprofitable kolkhozes?

"Perhaps they would. But we are not going to give up our land..."

And with this, the discussion ended.

Let us return to the April session of the Council of Ministers. The Minister of Trade, A. Zheleznov, lamented that trade is "stretched to the limit." Industry in the republic is falling short in deliveries of necessary goods to the tune of many millions of rubles. The same pertains to the Ministry of Light Industry which, because it is "twisting" gross volume indicators, reports that plans are being over-fulfilled. The state agro-industrial complex, the Ministry of Land Reclamation and Water Resources, and other departments are maintaining the same line. Hundreds of millions of rubles are wandering about in accounts in the form of fines for under-deliveries, non-production expenditures, and goods for which there is no call. And what is the Council of Ministers doing? Nothing. It is verifying the facts—and it is failing to find levers of power which could destroy the obsolete economic management mechanism.

The soviets of peoples deputies could become a reliable barrier in the way of departmental interests. The Council of Ministers asked for information about how affairs are being managed: how many times have local organs made interesting proposals for the development of their regions, for the complex solution of vitally important problems? Only one was discovered. The rest of the questions have been introduced, both to the presidium and to the "big Council of Ministers," as a rule, "from above." The departments are drawing up the plans themselves, are doing the preparatory work on questions themselves, and are themselves supervising how they are going... Time and again at the sessions, I heard proposals by the Minister of Motor Transport and Highways, A. Jordan, about combining small departmental motor vehicle facilities. This promises great economic benefit—savings of fuel and spare parts, more efficient use of equipment, reduction of staffs—although it promises only additional trouble for the minister himself. The proposal is registered, examined, discussed... and disappears without a trace.

With the same sort of dying echo, a large number of requests from rural people that they be delivered from the suffocating weight of various kinds of agricultural chemicals, agricultural power, and agricultural aviation are reverberating through the long corridors of the Council of Ministers... Indeed, with economic accountability, nobody wants to throw money to the winds.

"In order to resolve a question," the chairman of one of the city executive committees told me "not for publication," "it is necessary to go only as far as Dzhumagulov..."

And what decisions are being made by the departments of the Council of Ministers—by more than 500 specialists and, indeed, rather highly qualified ones? Their work, basically, is as follows: a signal from below—a proposal upward; a decision from above—a resolution downward... In April alone more than 1,600 documents passed followed this path. The reverse flow had already grown to 6,254. The general department used almost 100,000 sheets of paper in order to reproduce them. Slowness, red tape in the solution of important questions is by no means a rarity on the floors of this solid building. I remember how I discovered a "mistake" in the resolution issued by the Kirghiz CP Central Committee and the republic Council of Ministers concerning the program for developing the capacity of construction organizations during the period 1986-1990. What bothered me was the figure "1986"—indeed, the resolution was approved in the middle of 1987.

"But we began to prepare it back in 1985," the chief of the Central Committee's department for construction then explained. "A very large document..."

Of course, it cannot be said that the housing construction base in the Kirghiz SSR is not developing. To the contrary, it is being strengthened more rapidly than at

any time. Without waiting for technical planning work to be completed, the people in Frunze have set about the reconstruction of a home-construction combine. And already this year, the capacity of the enterprise will almost double. The production of parts for homes at the Osh, Przhevalsk, and Belovodsk combines is growing, plants are being built for the production of linoleum, ceramic tile, and parquet... But, again, very many decisions are being made "at the top." How much time and effort the departments of the Council of Ministers are spending on drawing up routine resolutions concerning additional measures for increasing housing construction! Dozens of tables, thousands of figures... Everything, as it were, is adjusted and hooked together. And, indeed, the chairman of the Shopokovsk City Executive Committee, M. Murzaliyev, has proposals from his deputies about ways to solve the housing problem in the territory entrusted to him, but nobody has asked him about this...

Practically every year, the Council of Ministers reports on its work to sessions of the Supreme Soviet. Strictly speaking, any question discussed by the deputies also is of concern to the government. It is true that, in recent years, the chosen representatives of the people have turned to the Council of Ministers, as a rule, only with requests—it has not been accepted practice to make demands and to exercise control. Now, the situation is changing. It is especially difficult for members of the government when the time comes to reply to deputies' inquiries. But it is still too early to talk about continuous, effective control of the work of the Council of Ministers.

The budget planning commission presents its ideas at sessions more frequently than others—it usually supplements the addresses of the chairmen of the Council of Ministers or Gosplan. But its corrections are, most often, "cosmetic" and do not change the essence of the matter. Having read through the mass of documents of this commission, I still could not understand how the republic looks vis-a-vis the country the country as a whole: what does it contribute to the "general kettle", and what does it receive? I learned the answer only from the chairman of the Council of Ministers, A. Dzhumagulov: every year the republic receives an subsidy from the all-union budget, amounting to approximately half a billion rubles. Understandably, there are no grounds to be proud of this figure, but also there are no reasons to hide it. On the contrary, it would be more correct to publish it, so that both the deputies and those who elect them—all together—could think about ways to raise the social and economic potential of their native territory.

People within the republic are justified in anticipating that the 19th All-Union Party Conference will return to the organs of popular power their real, their deserved place. Nonetheless, to have real strength, true authority, they will have to struggle—through energetic activity and the solution of pressing problems. This pertains, far from least, to the government of the republic.



**Kalinin Obkom Chief Tatarchuk Interviewed on Rural Development**

18000563 Moscow SELSKAYA ZHIZN in Russian  
18 Jun 88 p 2

[Interview with the Kalinin Party Obkom First Secretary N.F. Tatarchuk, by D. Prosekov: "Concerns and Prospects: Readers' Letters on Social Development of Upper Volga Villages Discussed by Kalinin Party Obkom First Secretary N.F. Tatarchuk"; first paragraph a boldface introduction]

[Text] Last year, SELSKAYA ZHIZN received 1990 letters from Kalinin Oblast. They were quite dissimilar. There were among them many troubling ones about squabbles, shortcomings and unresolved problems of social development. This is unsettling, especially since the issue of social development on the countryside has come to the fore and has become a priority. It was at the center of attention of a recent CPSU Central Committee plenum and a USSR Supreme Soviet session. The CPSU Central Committee's Theses for the 19th Party Conference addressed it pointedly and directly. This newspaper has asked the Kalinin Party Obkom's First Secretary N.F. Tatarchuk to discuss these letters on a vitally important subject.

[Question] Nikolay Fedorovich, many readers are concerned about the slow pace of development of Kalinin Oblast's villages. What do you think about this problem?

[Answer] The concern of Kalinin Oblast residents is justified. The oblast's villages are lagging behind their neighbors in social development. This situation has been in the making for a long time. As is well-known, capital investment was channeled mainly into industrial construction, while residential structures and buildings of social, cultural and consumer services use were a low priority.

Such projects, however, are particularly important for the Upper Volga region, given the small size of its farm holdings. Imagine, the oblast has over 10,000 villages. Here, usual standards should not be applied to the task of organizing services for the rural population. If people's comforts are not taken into consideration, we can not expect them to work very hard. Many people have left their native places, especially remote ones. Villages have been depopulated.

It should be noted that a lot has been done in the past 2 years. Capital investment has risen approximately twofold compared to the same period of the previous 5-year plan. Construction plans for residences, schools and pre-school and other facilities have been fulfilled. Some 66 kilometers of water pipes and 170 kilometers of gas pipes have been laid. Attention to the people and improvements in the conditions of their labor have stemmed the flight of manpower from the countryside. Many rural collectives have received a healthy influx of workers. For instance, in just 1 year more than 800 new

people have arrived to the kolkhozes and sovkhozes of Staritskiy Rayon, and around 500 people to the farms of the Oleninskiy Rayon. New people have come to other rayons as well. This is encouraging.

But, unfortunately, poor organization, mismanagement, even callous attitude toward the people persist in some areas; the indignation of citizen Burykina from kolkhoz imeni Kalinin, Zharkovskiy Rayon, citizen Sukhareva from Oleninskiy Rayon and others is understandable. The party obkom and oblispolkom are concerned about such incidents and are combatting them.

[Question] Many letters express concern that rural type residences are built at a very slow rate, and that they are not distributed equitably. What can you say about this?

[Answer] The CPSU Central Committee's Theses called the task of increasing the rate of residential construction a top priority. The problem of residential space is one of the most urgent and acute ones overall and in our conditions, given our fragmented character, it is a particularly sensitive issue. Desire to get a quality residence, one that would correspond to the rural lifestyle, is understandable. Highrise buildings, especially ones without modern conveniences, no longer satisfy rural residents. I must admit that at some areas such 3- and 4-story buildings constructed of prefabricated blocks stand empty.

We have drawn conclusions from this experience. We have set the course to construct mainly rural type residences. Fortunately, our construction industry allows us to do so. Rural housebuilding organizations of the Agropromstroy network are able to build at least 140,000 square meters of residential space annually. Plus, enterprises of the forest and fuel industries and entities of the industrial forestry administration can build prefab and log residences totaling some 100,000 square meters. In addition, we have the capacities of the Main Kalinin Construction Trust at our disposal. Incidentally, the oblast had no such capacities before. The challenge is to use them efficiently. Also, we are not going to stop here. In addition to contract-based construction methods, we have been encouraging direct construction as well, by farms themselves. Last year, more than half of new rural residential space was built this way. The oblast fulfilled the 2-year plan for residential space and social, cultural and consumer services facilities. Yet, behind the averages, there are clear shortcomings at a number of rayons, such as Belskiy, Vyshnevolotskiy, Rzhevskiy, Rameshkovskiy and Krasnokholmskiy Rayons. Some rayon administrators and construction organization managers had to be disciplined for permitting the lags to occur.

It is hard to build quality residences, but it is equally important to distribute them equitably. Most collectives do it properly, but some annoying exceptions occur. Injustice always hurts and upsets a person. Party, soviet and trade union organizations correct those administrators who break the rules and disregard public opinion. Of



course, it is a mistake not to inform the people in advance how the residences will be distributed, since it gives rise to various rumors. This is what L. Sinkova reported from Vyshnevolotskiy Rayon. Party committees, including the oblast one, have always combatted the practice of assigning residences outside the general waiting list, and will continue to do so in the future. Distribution of residential space will be done in the open, which would help prevent abuses.

[Question] Many letters address the issue of roads. How is this problem being solved?

[Answer] The saying correctly states that the road is the beginning of everything. So far, the situation has been difficult. Only half of the 716 central kolkhoz and sovkhoz farms are linked to their rayon centers by paved roads. The situation with roads linking various units within collective farms is worse still, which was correctly pointed out in letters to the editor by villagers from Pavlunnikovo, Rameshkovskiy Rayon; by M. Vinogradova from Kimrskiy Rayon and by others. In spring and fall milk often gets to purchasing centers on tread-equipped tractors.

In the past 2 years, there has been a sharp improvement in highway construction rates. Over 2,000 kilometers of highways have been built or have undergone capital repairs, out of the 6,500-kilometer total that the 5-year plan calls for. During this period, 51 central kolkhoz and sovkhoz farms have been linked with rayon centers. Some 46 new rural bus routes have been established.

Yet, these are initial steps. By 1995, our goal is to build paved roads connecting rayon centers with all central kolkhoz and sovkhoz farms and their affiliates, as well as with all animal farms and complexes. Of course it will be hard, but we do not have any choice.

What are the problems we face? The oblast suffers from shortages of road metal and gravel. We have to search for them locally. Thus, we plan to build a gravel plant at the Oktyabr deposit, at the Selizhansk quarry. Next year, a new sorting plant will begin operations at the Kiselevsk deposit.

Everyone uses highways. Consequently, every enterprise should help build them, regardless of its departmental affiliation. This is how party committees pose this question today.

[Question] Readers A. Skvortsova from Kalininskiy Rayon, I. Nikitin from Rameshkovskiy Rayon and N. Simakov from Penovskiy Rayon, villagers from Khotinovo, Torzhokskiy Rayon and others complain bitterly about retail, medical and consumer services. What are the party obkom and local soviets doing about it, taking into consideration the specifics of this sector?

[Answer] Recently I met with villagers from Bolshaya Kosha, Selizharovskiy Rayon. It is as remote as it gets. People were rightly critical of their health services. It turns out that every time they have a minor problem they must travel to the rayon hospital, which is, incidentally, the only place they can obtain their sick leave authorizations. But how to get there, given our roadless conditions? We had to solve the problem taking our specific characteristics into account. We asked the oblast's health services department to send a registered nurse for Bolshaya Kosha, with the right to sign sick leave authorizations in special cases.

This is, of course, a special case. Yet, similar unforeseen situations arise often. They can not all be solved using stereotypical solutions. A customized approach is needed, to make people's life more comfortable.

One of the causes of problems in the medical services field is the shortage of staff. We are addressing it by creating good living conditions in rural areas. This would help retain medical professionals, and teachers as well.

Not all the old diseases have been cured in retail services, either. There are fewer and fewer of them, but they still exist. They include the poor, often very decrepit, state of our stores, the modest choice of goods and rude service. None of this, naturally, escapes the attention of party and soviet organizations. We are taking measures and making sure that supplies reach remote villages. Every day, 123 motorized stores are in operation, and we also use beasts of burden. "Trust shops" have been introduced, as well as the practice of using volunteer sales clerks working out of their homes; other steps have been taken as well. Unconscionable sales employees who break the rules of retail trade are punished. Last year, 254 employees of consumer cooperative organizations were disciplined.

In their letters as well as at personal meetings, people rightly complain that in rural areas it is often difficult to buy a washing machine, a refrigerator and other consumer durables, even though the oblast consumer cooperative gets increasing numbers of such items. It turns out that most of these goods are put on sale at rayon centers. We have condemned this practice and restored order.

Equally justified are complaints about consumer services. Yet, the oblast as a whole fulfilled the 1987 plan for consumer services. Consumer services increased 11 percent, but one out of every three enterprises underfulfilled its quota. In addition, there has been much criticism of the poor quality and delays. At times a person is so mercilessly harassed that he loses any desire to come to a consumer service outlet ever again.

[Question] A final question. What are the plans in social restructuring of the countryside for this year? How successfully have they been carried out thus far?

[Answer] This year, in the oblast's villages we are planning to build 460,000 square meters of residential space, schools for 2,000 students, pre-school facilities for 2,600 children and clubs with a 2,500 seating capacity. An extensive program of comprehensive automation of animal farms has been approved, especially for areas that are short of manpower.

However, we lack sufficient investment capital for all these projects. Unfortunately, the RSFSR Gosagroprom has not been very accommodating and has not been carrying out the RSFSR Council of Minister's resolution passed January 9, 1985, which laid out measures to accelerate the social restructuring of the countryside in Kalinin Oblast for the period 1985-1990. Currently, we are short of funding for 60,000 square meters of residential space. Some social, cultural and consumer services facilities and some animal farm automation projects lack sufficient financing. This is an extremely important issue. The oblast's kolkhozes and sovkhozes, because of their low profitability and loss-making work, do not have their own sources of funding yet. The reliance on central sources of funding of such Non-Black Soil regions as Kalinin Oblast seems to me justified.

To fulfill the rural construction program passed by Russia's government we also need construction materials. Unfortunately, funds allocated for many types of construction materials are insufficient to fulfill the plan. Thus, the oblast has begun to build residential space and social, cultural and consumer services facilities using the resources of farms themselves, and we intend to develop this method further. Yet, without centrally provided slate, cement, window pane glass and decoration materials this task can not be carried out.

We have far-reaching goals. Party committees and local soviets will continue to enhance the means and methods of exerting their influence over the restructuring of life on the countryside.

The CPSU Central Committee's Theses stress that activist social policy is one of the main priorities of the party's work. The oblast's party committees will base their own work on this principle. I believe that in our task, we will be greatly helped by glasnost and by readers' comments whereby they express their concern and their interest in a successful resolution of problems of Upper Volga villages.

12892

### Motives, Impact of German-Soviet Nonaggression Pact Explored

18000619 Moscow KOMSOMOLSKAYA PRAVDA in Russian 24 Aug 88 p 3

[Interview with Vasily Mikhaylovich Kulish, doctor of historical sciences and veteran of the Great Patriotic War, by A. Novikov, KOMSOMOLSKAYA PRAVDA correspondent: "On the Threshold of the War"; date and place not given]

[Text] [Question] Recently, the blank spots on the historical map of our country have gradually begun to disappear, but there are still quite a few of them. One of the gaps is the USSR's foreign policy in the prewar period.

[Answer] The conditions for our victory in the war are said to have been prepared in the thirties. But, unfortunately, very significant prerequisites for the defeat of the Red Army at the very outset of the war also took shape during those years. Following the 20th party congress the accepted thing in our literature has been to say that the reasons for the failures of the Red Army lie in I.V. Stalin's miscalculation in determining the date of fascist Germany's attack on the USSR. There was indeed a miscalculation, but of what kind—a random mistake? Or perhaps only a link in a chain of errors? Let us think about it.

The thirties.... Fascism's rise to power in Germany. Japan launches aggression in the Far East and Italy and North Africa. January 1934—Stalin's speech at the 17th party congress, where he says that the situation has become more acute, that parties representing militant imperialism and parties representing war and revenge were moving into the foreground, that things were clearly headed toward a new war. The words seem to be right, but this was nothing more than a registration of the facts. But was a more profound evaluation made of the situation that had come about in the world, and what conclusions were drawn about how we must act?

[Question] Lines were drawn in the leadership of the party and country over these issues in the thirties. The group of political and military figures who held the power—I.V. Stalin, V.M. Molotov, K.Ye. Voroshilov, A.A. Zhdanov, L.M. Kaganovich, G.M. Malenkov, S.M. Budennyi, and L.Z. Mekhlis—took the line that the capitalist encirclement was entirely hostile to the Soviet Union and regarded fascism as nothing more than just one of the varieties of imperialism. The danger of German fascism, its military threat to the Soviet Union as well as to the countries of bourgeois democracy, was underestimated.

[Answer] N.I. Bukharin, M.M. Litvinov, M.N. Tukhachevskiy, I.P. Uborevich, A.I. Yegorov, and others represented the other school of political and military thinking. N.I. Bukharin stated the proposition that fascism in Germany was a qualitatively new political phenomenon

in the system of imperialism. In his speech at the 17th party congress he declared that fascist ideology was preaching "outright piracy," and outright "philosophy of bestiality," and "knife-fighting," and this was its practice in Germany itself. Bukharin said in another statement that fascism was setting itself up against the moderate bourgeois democracies and only in an alliance with them was it possible to deter fascist aggression. These same arguments—about the possibility and even inevitability of German aggression against the USSR, about the need for an antifascist alliance with the western bourgeois democracies—were advanced repeatedly by Uborevich and Tukhachevskiy, but the real power was in the hands of the first group—and it was that group that was determining foreign political activity.

[Question] But yet in the thirties all the steps were taken—quite significant ones—to create a system of collective security in Europe.

[Answer] Yes. In December 1933 the All-Union Communist Party (Bolshevik) Central Committee adopted a decree on organizing a struggle to create an effective system of collective security in Europe in order to preserve the peace and deter aggression. In 1934 the USSR entered the League of Nations and over the 3 years that followed it concluded treaties on mutual assistance with France, Czechoslovakia, and Mongolia and a nonaggression treaty with China.

But this sound line of foreign policy began to be pursued in the first half of the thirties, when the cult of Stalin's personality and the related command-administrative system of administration had just gathered force, when democracy and glasnost still existed to some extent in our country. Later, it changed—the course headed toward rapprochement with fascist Germany became stronger and stronger. This was, of course, served by the Munich deal in 1938, but the main role, of course, was played by Stalin's position toward fascism, which he openly proclaimed at the 17th party congress. This is what he declared at that time: "...we are far from being delighted with the fascist regime in Germany. But fascism is not the point here, if only because fascism, in Italy, for example, has not stood in the way of the USSR's establishing the best relations with that country." Having become the ruler with all the power, Stalin implemented that principle through the foreign policy of the USSR.

[Question] There is another position which needs clarification. Speaking in a session of the Supreme Soviet on 31 May 1939, Molotov declared that the Soviet Government had accepted the proposal of England and France to open negotiations in order to strengthen relations among those three countries and to organize a peace front against further aggression. In other words—against Hitler Germany. English and French military missions arrived in Moscow on 11 August. But their leaders did not have the power to sign a treaty; the negotiations bogged down and were never able to get going, and in the



end came to nothing. The question is this: Why did England and France, which perfectly understood the military danger from Germany, shirk from concluding an alliance with the USSR and in this way setting up a strong barrier to Hitler?

[Answer] The point is that the policy of the English and French Governments was not consistent on this question. They did not want to bind themselves with specific obligations.

[Question] The course of the negotiations was also influenced to no small degree by the fact that the period of repression had weakened our country. No state, after all, as is well-known, can risk concluding a treaty on joint actions—especially in war—with a partner known to be weakened.

There is also something else that needs to be borne in mind: The Stalinist leadership of the USSR felt that England and France would be too much for Hitler and did not try very hard to make an alliance with them, adopting a waiting position. Voroshilov once said in a conversation immediately after the war: "We still thought that if Germany attacked England and France, it would become tied down there for a long time. Who would have thought that France would cave in in just 2 weeks!"

[Answer] On 20 August 1939, when the Soviet-Franco-English negotiations were already under way in Moscow, Hitler sent Stalin a telegram saying that in relations between Germany and Poland "a crisis" could "break out any day" in which the Soviet Union would also become involved if it did not immediately agree to conclude a nonaggression treaty with Germany. Hitler wrote: "Once again, then, I suggest that you receive my minister of foreign affairs on Tuesday, 22 August, and no later than Wednesday, 23 August. The imperial minister will be endowed with all extraordinary powers to draft and sign a nonaggression pact." This proposal, although it was written in the form of an ultimatum, fitted in with Stalin's intentions and to some degree was in line with his appraisal of fascism back at the 17th party congress. And even though the English and French representatives were still sitting in Moscow, the Soviet leadership received Ribbentrop, and the nonaggression treaty was signed. Khmel'nitskiy, Voroshilov's aide, has told about Stalin summoning him and ordering him to convey to Voroshilov, who at that time was sitting in the negotiations with the English and French as the head of the Soviet delegation, to break off the negotiations. And R.P. Khmel'nitskiy delivered a note to Voroshilov: "Klim! Koba says to turn off the hurdy-gurdy."

[Question] By all appearances it was from that moment that the change in Stalin's course in the direction of Germany became obvious. During Ribbentrop's visit he made the toast: "Since the German people so loves its fuhrer, we will drink to the fuhrer's health." And Molotov officially made this new line public when on 31

August he declared in a session of the Supreme Soviet: "Even yesterday the fascists of Germany were conducting a foreign policy toward the USSR that was hostile to us. Yes, even yesterday we were adversaries in the field of foreign affairs. But today the situation has changed, and we have ceased to be enemies." In a few hours the Germans invaded Poland.

[Answer] The intention at that time, in August, was that the western oblasts of the Ukraine and Belorussia that were under the power of Poland were to go to the Soviet Union....

[Question] ...And that is what happened. On 17 September Molotov announced over the radio that the Polish state was "internally unsound" and that the "Soviet Government had issued an order to the supreme command of the Red Army to order forces to cross the border and take under their protection the life and property of the population of the western Ukraine and western Belorussia." The Red Army carried out the order and in a short time occupied extensive territories to the west of the border. The German forces were at that time advancing from west to east. And on 28 September a treaty on friendship and on the border between the USSR and Germany was signed in Moscow. As a matter of fact, as far as I know, literature on Soviet history has never mentioned this odious document.

[Answer] A number of other declarations were also made in that period. For instance, on 17 September the USSR declared neutrality in the war, and on 19 September a Soviet-German communique was published which stated that Soviet and German forces had been set the task of "restoring peace and order and the disrupted consequences of the collapse of the Polish state." We declare neutrality and immediately, in literally 2 days, we declare ourselves to be allies of fascist Germany toward defeated Poland for the purpose of restoring order there! And on 31 August Molotov, speaking in a session of the Supreme Soviet to justify the need of the treaty on friendship and the border, offered an utterly different description of German fascism than before.

[Question] I will take the liberty of quoting. First, Molotov said that "it took only a brief strike against Poland first from the German Army and then the Red Army to obliterate that deformed offspring of the Versailles Treaty." And then he said in this appalling statement: "The ideology of Hitlerism...can be recognized or denied.... But everyone will realize that an ideology cannot be destroyed by force.... It is not only senseless, then, but even criminal to wage such a war as a war to 'destroy Hitlerism,' concealed under the false flag of a struggle for 'democracy.'" As a matter of fact, it was in that same speech that Molotov radically shifted what had been the political emphasis, when he said: "Now...Germany is in the position of the state that is striving for peace, and England and France...are opposed to the conclusion of peace." Thus the aggressor turned out not to be Hitler, but England and France....



[Answer] The declaration of the Soviet and German Governments was published as early as 29 September in connection with the signing of the treaty on friendship and the border. It contained an appeal to terminate the war between Germany on the one hand and England and France on the other. "If, however," it stated, "these efforts prove unsuccessful, this will establish the fact that England and France bear responsibility for perpetuating the war, and should the war continue, the governments of Germany and the USSR will consult with one another on the steps which are necessary." And before his departure from Moscow Ribbentrop declared to a TASS correspondent that if in England and France "those who are inciting war win out, then Germany and the USSR will know how to respond."

[Question] From which it follows: Stalin did not exclude the possibility of entering the war on Hitler's side?

[Answer] No one knows. But I do not think that Stalin intended to go that far. It is one thing to draw closer to Germany in the interests of carrying out one's policy, and something quite different to conclude a military alliance with fascism. He was aware that such an alliance would be impossible for him for political reasons and reasons of ideology and military strategy.

[Question] But nothing prevented Stalin from declaring: "The friendship of the peoples of Germany and the Soviet Union, strengthened in blood, has every basis for being prolonged and firm." And what about Hitler? How sincerely did he take this brotherhood?

[Answer] Stalin expressed it in his own style: saying something other than what he was thinking. Having become in effect a dictator, in the field of foreign policy Stalin was guided not so much by scientific assessments as by the desire to subordinate the development of international processes to his own will, "playing" on the contradictions of imperialism. This can explain the USSR's rapprochement with fascist Germany at the end of the thirties, which glaringly contradicted the Soviet policy of setting up a system of collective security in Europe. Marshal of the Soviet Union G.K. Zhukov said of Stalin's policy that "at the beginning he (Stalin—V.K.) was convinced that it was he who would twist Hitler around his little finger by concluding the pact. But then it all turned out just the other way around."

On 23 November 1939 Hitler made a speech to the leaders of the Wehrmacht in which he described our country as a state weakened by internal processes and did not represent a serious military threat to Germany. He placed the nonaggression treaty with the USSR in the class of "precautionary" treaties which in his opinion would be observed by the parties to it only so long as it was expedient. "The fact remains," he said, "that Russian armed forces have low combat readiness at the present time. The present situation will persist over the next 1 or 2 years." Hitler then added: "We will be able to move against Russia only after we free ourselves in the

west." Nevertheless, the "precautionary" treaty did help fascist Germany substantially in avoiding the "nightmare" of a war on two fronts in the period 1939-1941. In 1940 Hitler committed his main forces—about 136 divisions—against England, France, the Netherlands, and Belgium, while he left 4 infantry divisions and 6 rear defense divisions on the border with the Soviet Union. In 1941 he threw his main forces against the Soviet Union, leaving only occupation forces in western Europe.

So, if we add up the subtotal, we can say that the foreign policy of the Stalinist leadership in the latter half of the thirties did not perform its main task—to guarantee the security of the Soviet Union. What is more, it allowed Germany to perform its own "tasks" in Europe as speedily as possible and to prepare for the attack on the Soviet Union.

[Question] But how about the argument that Stalin's foreign policy, in particular the signing of the nonaggression treaty, helped to put off Germany's attack by 1.5 years?

[Answer] That postponement did not occur because of the treaty. The German leadership was carrying out its plan of war in Europe: first to crush Poland, occupy or bring into its coalition the states of northern and southeastern Europe, to deal with France and, if possible, England, to "free itself" in the west, and to strengthen the alliance with Italy and Japan. It was that that required the 1.5 years. It would have been risky to undertake an attack on the USSR in the fall of 1939, when Germany had about 110 divisions, more than 43 of which were deployed in the west, even though Hitler did consider the Soviet Union to be weakened. German armed forces were deployed in Europe in the course of the war. By the beginning of the war against the USSR the German Army numbered 208 divisions, 152 of which were thrown against our country. Judge for yourself who benefitted from that "postponement."

[Question] It is well-known that Stalin had been warned about the attack being prepared and that specific dates had been named. Even Count Schulenburg, German ambassador in the USSR, had openly said that war would soon begin. Could Stalin not have believed this?

[Answer] Stalin had quite detailed information even about fascist Germany's preparation of the attack on the USSR and also about the dates when it would begin, and indeed even about the forces used in the aggression. At the same time, he seems to have deliberately shut his eyes to the realities, saying that Hitler would not commit a violation of the treaty. Stalin actually said that our intelligence agents could not be believed, and in a short time—between 1936 and 1940—five chiefs of the Chief Intelligence Administration of the General Staff were victims of the repression.

But while he did not wish to listen to his friends, Stalin allowed himself to be lulled to sleep by his enemies. In 1941 he sent Hitler a confidential letter in which he raised the issue of Germany's preparations for war close to our borders. Hitler responded by giving his word as reichskanzler that his country was not preparing an attack on the USSR. Hitler explained the fact that forces had been brought to eastern Europe close to the borders of the USSR in terms of the need to prepare them for the invasion of England where they would be inaccessible to the English Air Force. And these amounted to 130 divisions! This was a lullaby for Iosif Vissarionovich....

While apparently understanding this in the depth of his soul, Stalin did everything not to provoke an attack in any way, so that Hitler would not suspect him of a desire to break the treaty. The reorganization and reequipping of our armed forces, which were actively undertaken in 1940, were not completed because of red tape, poor organization, the bureaucratic methods of administration, industry was performing poorly, and it was not producing weapons in the quantities needed. What is more, there was no military doctrine to speak of. The one that had been formulated in the twenties had actually not been reviewed. The only propositions that were advanced were that we would wage war on foreign territory, and with little bloodshed we would turn it into a civil war in which the world proletariat would fight the world bourgeoisie.

Because we had prepared to fight on foreign territory, more than half of our stocks—weapons, ammunition, uniforms, equipment, and fuel, were stored close to the border. And in the 1st week of the war 25,000 freight cars (30 percent of all the stocks) of ammunition, 50 percent of all the stocks of fuel and food and animal feed had already been either destroyed or taken by the enemy. These were the vivid consequences of the shortsighted policy.

Fearing to provoke Germany's attack, Stalin took steps which are difficult to explain. For instance, not long before the fascist aggression official permission was granted the Germans at their request to "study the graves" of German soldiers who died in World War I and were buried on our territory. And so along all the routes—from the Baltic Sea and almost to the Black Sea—groups of German intelligence agents walked in the rear of our armed forces supposedly "studying the graves." A second fact. The German Air Force had freely violated our airspace and had penetrated the depth of Soviet territory to great distances and was actively gathering intelligence, and our PVO forces were categorically forbidden to bring down these intelligence planes. What is more, when the German airplanes were forced to land at our airports because of engine failure, they were repaired and fueled and sent back home in peace. Until the very last moment—at 0300 hours on the morning of 22 June 1941—our freight trains carrying grain, ore, and so on, under the treaty, were regularly dispatched to

Germany, even though Germany ceased the return deliveries to us, especially of machines and machine tools, back at the beginning of 1941. The Germans showed our acceptance people finished machine tools, and they accepted them, but these machine tools never reached us.

[Question] But we have already gotten up to the summer of 1941, and our interview was supposed to be about the prewar period. That is why I would like to go back to 1940 and recall once again an immoral understanding between Stalin and Hitler—the agreement to repatriate Germans from the USSR. Under it many Germans who were patriots and party members were turned over to Germany. Here is a case recounted to me recently by one of our historians—V.I. Dashichev. In 1937 Neuman, a member of the Politburo of the German Communist Party, the second man in the GCP after Ernst Telman, came to the USSR with his wife. Immediately after he arrived in Moscow he disappeared without a trace and was obviously shot, but his wife was thrown in a camp in the area around Vorkuta. In 1940, under the agreement on repatriation, this woman was sent back to Germany along with other German party members and went straight from a Soviet camp to the Ravensbrück concentration camp. As a matter of fact, many Bulgarian, Polish, and Hungarian party members either went to prison or were shot when they arrived in the USSR....

[Answer] Yes, many Communists who belonged to the leadership of the communist parties and who were in Moscow, in the Comintern, were victims of the repression. For example, the Polish Communist Party was dissolved completely without any basis as being "revisionist." Many people were killed. It is true that Georgiy Dimitrov did not fall victim to the repression, but even he was completely isolated during the war. Even when Soviet forces were preparing to enter the territory of Bulgaria in 1944, he was not promptly informed, even though he was general secretary of the Bulgarian Communist Party.

The total number of victims of the repression are beyond counting—they were not just one or two, these were tens, hundreds, and thousands of people. That was the fate, for example, of Bela Kun; and Krestinskiy, one of the founders of the Bulgarian Communist Party, was shot.

Another unforgivable error of Stalin was his line of doctrine that the Social Democrats were the main adversary of Communists.

[Question] I would like to recall in this connection a letter published in the third issue of the magazine DRUZHBA NARODOV from the well-known Soviet journalist Ernst Genri to the writer Ilya Erenburg. Recalling that back in 1924 Stalin had called for "mortal combat against social democracy," E. Genri wrote: "Stalin's words were the same as an order to the Comintern, just like his instructions to the Red Army or the NKVD. They split off the workers from one another like

a barricade.... The old social democrat workers were everywhere not only humiliated to the depth of their soul, they were infuriated. They have not forgiven the Communists for this. And the Communists, clenching their teeth, carried out the order about "mortal combat." Everywhere, as though they had lost their minds, the Social Democrats and Communists raged against one another before the very eyes of the fascists. I...will never forget how the old comrades clenched their fists...how the theory of social fascism laid the road to Hitler month by month, week by week.... Stalin renounced the theory of social fascism only in 1935, but it was already too late.... Having strengthened his rear in Germany and throughout western Europe, and observing with malicious satisfaction that the antifascists were at one another's throats. Hitler was able to begin the war. And he did begin it. His front and rear were strengthened by the policy of the 'Soviet Machiavelli.' Instead of uniting them and bringing them together on the eve of the decisive historical battle, Stalin drove them apart, fragmented them, and frightened them away."

Tell me, Vasily Mikhaylovich, how is all this to be explained? After all, one gets the impression that Stalin deliberately destroyed and undermined the country—its economy, science, culture, and security. He even went as far as the international communist movement and discredited the very ideals of communism!

[Answer] This is altogether inexplicable to a normal man.

It would have seemed that Stalin had to do everything to strengthen our state and its security. And verbally everything actually was splendid. But in practice everything was done the other way about. How to explain all this? There is no way it can be explained from the point of view of common sense. But if we still look for some explanation, then I think it lies in the usurpation of power, in the maniacal desire to preserve his own exclusive power, the absence of control and criticism of the activity of the highest party and Soviet leadership.

[Question] And the last question. Historians, writers, and journalists are now being quite often addressed reproaches like this: they are engaging in slander, they are canceling all of our past so that not a single bright spot seems to be left in our history. What is your attitude toward such a position?

[Answer] The researcher's task is to examine the process the way it was, not as he would like to see it, and not to be concerned with judging whether there is more positive or more negative and comparing them to make it look better. Research must not be apologetic, it must be truthful. In doing that we are not insulting those people who died and fought on the front and who worked heroically in the rear. It was they in fact who rescued the country, they shielded it with their own bodies.

07045

### Career, Crimes of Azerbaijan's M. D. Bagirov Summarized

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15 Jun 88 p 3

[Article by L. Polonskiy under the rubric "Blank Spots in Our History": "The Leader's Viceroy, Mir Dzhafar Bagirov. Path to Power. Crimes Against the People"]

[Text] For 20 years, as first secretary of the republic's CP Central Committee, he stood at the head of the party organization in Azerbaijan. Mir Dzhafar Bagirov, in contrast to V. Molotov, K. Voroshilov, L. Kaganovich, A. Zhdanov, and L. Beriya, did not belong to I. Stalin's closest circle, but all these years was considered to be a loyal pupil of the great leader, one of his comrades-in-arms. He was unlimited sovereign of the republic, the ruler of its citizens' destinies and, behind his back, they called him "the master"—some with servility and reverence, but most people—with concealed hatred and fear. Azerbaijan was a place where "thirty-seven" brought the greatest possible devastation; here, the Stalinist thesis that the class struggle will intensify as socialism advances was implemented with special zeal. Herein lay Bagirov's greatest service to Stalin, one which was invariably valued. In this period of the cult, central committee leaders in all the republics ended up being "enemies of the people" and lost their heads. Bagirov survived!

People of the older generation will remember Bagirov's heavy glance from behind the lenses of his horn-rimmed glasses, his low, angry voice, his hands, often massaging a pencil. In imitation of his leader, he wore moustaches, but of more modest dimensions. In general, he used all means to stress his own personal modesty, and he called upon party activists to do the same. It is true that he and his family occupied a private palace in the very center of the city; however, he always went around in plain, dungaree overalls.

In 1956, the Military Collegium of the USSR Supreme Court sentenced M. D. Bagirov, together with his associates, to the maximum penalty—execution by firing squad—for the highest crimes against the people. Terrible deeds, committed by Bagirov and those who had served as his main support, were cited. And it turned out that they preferred not to revert to this most evil of figures, one who had brought great misfortune to the Azerbaijan people.

Today, when we are doing away with the "blank spots" in our history, when we are giving honest consideration to the recent past, we have no right to pass over in silence the time of the rule of Mir Dzhafar Bagirov, who locally personified authoritarian power in its most distorted manifestations. While being an ardent champion of the cult surrounding the man who held sway in the Kremlin, he at the same time propagated his own "small" cult as well, and both the general situation in the country and the situation created in Azerbaijan itself facilitated this.



"Not only are we not indifferent to the question of the goals and values of socialism, but we are also not indifferent to the question of the means by which they are achieved, of the human price which must be paid for them," stress the Theses of the CPSU Central Committee for the 19th All-Union Party Conference.

Our present policy signifies a return to Leninist principles and fundamentals, to restoration of the moral health of society, to an emancipation from everything alien to its humanist essence. Therefore, it is so important to turn to the career of M.D. Bagirov, to how this man, who was inherently incompatible with the goals of the October Revolution and of communist morality, became the leader of the republic party organization. We very much need, it is extremely necessary to draw lessons from what happened, to recall what a rejection of Leninist norms of life, an absence of democracy and of glasnost can lead to.

The rank-and-file rural teacher, Mir Dzhafar Bagirov was distinguished among his colleagues by his authoritative character, his immoderate ambition and his excellent memory. After the February revolution of 1917, he decided that his hour had also arrived. It certainly was not service to the laboring people that concerned Mir Dzhafar, and it was not the path of the Bolsheviks which he pursued. Bagirov attached himself to an unbridled reactionary, to the large land-owner Alibek Zizikskiy. An officer in the Tsarist army, Zizikskiy held a solid post in Kubinskiy Uyezd and set Bagirov up as an assistant to the chief of the militia. He petitioned the governor of Baku on his ward's behalf:

"By a resolution dated 10 May of this year, the Executive Committee has approved temporary commissar of the second precinct in the city of Kuba, Dzhafar Bagirov, for assignment to the functions of assistant to the Kubinskiy Uyezd commissar. As a consequence of the fact that Bagirov meets the requirements of this assignment, the Executive Committee requests his confirmation for the position of assistant to the uyezd commissar."

The assistant commissar, having experienced the taste of power, creates a "flying squad," essentially a band of bandits, which confiscated arms from soldiers returning from the front and mercilessly plundered the population. They brutally massacred, eliminated, the unsubmissive and the not-useful. Subsequently, having succeeded in changing his image and in gaining trust, Bagirov would pass off these, his criminal activities, as revolutionary struggle, would think up exploits for himself, and would find witnesses who would confirm them. The old menshevik, Yu. Sumbatov-Topuridze, having assumed for himself the role of an old militant chekist, declares for all to hear: "There were occasions, to which I was an eye-witness, when comrade Bagirov was surrounded by 80 bandits and fought them by himself."

It has remained unexplained how Bagirov entered the Bolshevik Party and even whether he joined it at all. In the dates, there is confusion, and in the documents—

there is a distortion of the truth, a juggling. A man with a dark past, an adventurist by nature, he was able, at a moment appropriate to himself, to attach himself to the revolution, to present himself as a fiery leader in it, and to push aside those who, in fact, had been its soul. In the whirlwind of revolutionary storm, in a period when the machinery of state was being shattered, such things happened.

And then began the swift advancement of Mir Dzhafar Bagirov, which is so difficult to explain. There is no telling how, in the twenties, he becomes chairman of the military tribunal attached to the Azerbaijan division and, just a little later, the deputy chairman of Tribunal 11 of the Red Army. From February 1921, Bagirov was chairman of the Azerbaijan Cheka.

He had an abundance of energy and he strived with all his might to demonstrate his devotion to the revolution and his implacability toward its enemies. However, his activities in the "flying squad" were not forgotten and, in January 1922, it was by a miracle that he was able to stay afloat. The Kavkazskiy Kray Commission for Purge of the Party issued him a severe reprimand for mercenary malfeasance, contact with dubious elements from Kuba, and the slaughter of persons arrested by the Cheka.

Eight years later, the Central Control Commission, headed by Sergo Ordzhonikidze, would lodge even more serious charges against him and would have him removed from the post of chairman of the Azerbaijan State Political Administration (GPU), which had succeeded the Cheka. It would have seemed that the career of M.D. Bagirov was finished. But L.P. Beriia threw him a life line and Bagirov again climbed upwards.

In our times, more and more is being published concerning L.P. Beriia, undoubtedly the darkest personality among Stalin's comrades-in-arms, an executioner who, with extreme diligence and on a monstrous scale, carried out the bloody designs of his benefactor and protector. Over the course of many years, Beriia was the guarantor of Mir Dzhafar Bagirov's security and prosperity, and Bagirov paid him back by personal devotion and all sorts of services. These were people cut from the same cloth and they maintained their "friendship" on the basis of a mutual concealment of the dirty past, of their criminal complicity. That is, of a cohesiveness which is an inherent part of the criminal world.

"A true Leninist-Stalinist"—this is what they called one another in the press.

The future people's commissar for internal affairs and Politburo member, deputy chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers, and chief of its punitive organs, L.P. Beriia, took his first steps in the field of state security under the wing of Mir Dzhafar Bagirov who, in 1921, brought him into the Azerbaijan Cheka as a deputy chairman.



It was no secret to Bagirov that Beriya had earlier been a paid agent of Musawat counterintelligence. Subsequently Beriya would keep in his office in Moscow, in his safe, dossiers containing super-secret documents. A note attached to them, personally handwritten by the all-mighty Lavrentiy Pavlovich, stated: "given to me by Comrade Bagirov." The files also contained an order from the chief of Musawat counterintelligence, A. Gogoberidze, concerning the fact that L.P. Beriya "has been enlisted for service in physical surveillance on the Apsherousk peninsula at a salary of 800 rubles a month," and other materials from the Musawat government's ministry of internal affairs concerning the "young but promising agent."

It was not enough to hide the damning documents. It was necessary to force those who knew the whole truth about the successful Lavrentiy Pavlovich to bite their tongues. In 1923, in a conversation with M.D. Bagirov, the board chairman of "Azryb," Baba Aliyev, took the liberty of asking indignantly: "how it was possible to accept a slippery person like this for work in the Azerbaijan Cheka!" and retribution followed. For his slanderous accusation, they shot Aliyev. Other people who threatened the Beriya's well-being were removed. When, after the intervention of party organizations, Beriya was nonetheless removed from his position in the Azerbaijan Cheka along with a reprimand and a prohibition against employment in the security organs, M.D. Bagirov gave his friend a splendid personal fitness report and recommended him to the Georgian Cheka.

In 1938 Bagirov destroyed the general secretary of the All-Union Komsomol Central Committee, A. Kosarev, who had spoken unfavorably of Beriya in his presence. Mir Dzhamal immediately informed Beriya of this and the latter, who already held the rank of USSR Peoples Commissar for Internal Affairs, personally accompanied by a group of workers from the peoples commissariat, went to arrest Kosarev.

The stenographic record of a session of the Azerbaijan CP Central Committee Buro testifies how M.D. Bagirov once routinely shielded his minion. A new deputy people's commissar for internal affairs in Azerbaijan, Nodzev, had submitted facts concerning the unpartylike conduct of Beriya, and Bagirov cut him short: "...And today, instead of, together with the entire Bolshevik organization, giving Beriya his due for his stubborn, bolshevik struggle during the last five or six years in Azerbaijan, you sink to gossip. There is no way that we can agree with this. I think that it is necessary to place the question of Nodzev's removal before the Peoples Commissariat for Internal Affairs and to issue him a reprimand containing a final warning."

They called Nodzev to Moscow and then "included" him in a conspiratorial organization and shot him.

Beriya's possibilities were enormous, even as early as 1930, if succeeded in returning the ousted M.D. Bagirov to a leadership position in Baku, in helping him to

become chief of the republic council of people's commissars, and then of the CP Central Committee of Azerbaijan.

Mutual back-scratching triumphed.

"There is no doubt that we are living in a sea of illegality and that the local influence is one of the greatest barriers, if not the greatest one, to the establishment of law and order and of culture," wrote V.I. Lenin. The Beriya-Bagirov phenomenon is of this order. Institutions that reliably opposed bureaucratism, that guaranteed democracy universally and irreversibly, did not succeed in developing during Lenin's lifetime. And Stalin, frightened by free, lively thought, by independence of judgments and views, deeply hated the intelligentsia in general and the party intelligentsia in particular. He needed people who did not have a famous revolutionary name, obedient people, ones absolutely devoid of preconceptions. He was not troubled by the earlier sins and mistakes of these assistants. And, in such a political situation, conditions developed for the rise and prosperity of Beriya, Bagirov, and people like them.

Having gotten into the party through the back door, M.D. Bagirov envied the old, esteemed party members who had gained authority among the masses, and he was prepared, at an appropriate moment, to wipe them from the face of the earth. As early as March 1922, Bagirov came out with an article entitled "Provocation or the Thoughtlessness of a Limited Person," which was directed against the prominent party member Gamid Sultanov, and two years later he attacked another prominent, crystal-pure Bolshevik, Gabib Dzhabiyeva. Seizing the floor at a congress of the Azerbaijan Communist Party, Bagirov maliciously interrupted the chairman of the Azerbaijan Central Executive Committee, a communist since 1904, Sultan Medzhid Efendiyev: "Efendiyev wants us to permit him to go around openly with weapons. You will croak before we permit this; we will take care of you at an opportune time and make short work of this."

The time when these treasured desires would be fulfilled was approaching, a time of massive and unbridled repressions, of all-encompassing arbitrary rule. M.D. Bagirov already had behind him a rich school of violence and humiliations against people, of illegal arrests, confiscation of property, exile to the North and to Siberia. In 1929-1930, while chairman of the Azerbaijan GPU, he had actively "participated" in collectivization and, in 1933, as first secretary of the Azerbaijan CP Central Committee, he "victoriously" completed it.

"Liquidation, specifically liquidation, and not forcing them out or restricting them..." he wrote about the well-to-do Azerbaijan peasants in personal notes not intended for publication. And Bagirov carried out their liquidation diligently and unyieldingly, under the banner of combatting the kulaks. "We must not forget that the growth of our successes, the growth of our victories will

encounter ever strengthening opposition from the enemies of socialism," said Bagirov, interpreting a theory put forth by Stalin, in justification of the period of repressions which had begun.

In 1937 his "talents" as an executioner were unleashed in all their force. He understood how useful the wide-scale extermination of the best party, soviet, economic, and military personnel was to Stalin, he knew how much an atmosphere of universal suspicion, oppressive fear, and terror was to the liking of his leader, and he tried not to miss his chance. And Beriya, in neighboring Georgia, served as an inspirational example.

First of all, he set about physical elimination of the people who had prepared the October Revolution, who had been moved up by it into the leadership of the party, the soviets, the trade unions and the peoples commissariats. Provocations were organized, cases were fabricated, and secret trials were conducted one after the other. In actuality, special conferences, the notorious "troykas," whose membership also included M.D. Bagirov himself, were passed off as trials. Among the first to fall victim of the violence were G. Musabekov, D. Buniatzade, S.M. Efendiyev, M. Pleshakov, R. Akhundov, M.D. Guseynov, L. Mirzoyan, I. Ulyanov, G. Vezirov, I. Dovlatov, U. Rakhmanov, I. Anashkin, and many other prominent communists—fighters for the victory of Soviet power in Azerbaijan.

Bagirov had a long arm, and he "reached out" to enemies beyond the boundaries of the republic. The legendary chief of "Azneft," a party member since 1904, M. Bafrinov, was already working in Moscow as chief of Glavneft and, at Bagirov's demand, they sent him under guard from there to Baku. Back in 1936, M.D. Bagirov sent N. Yeshov a letter about calling A.G. Karayev, then working in the Institute of Red Professors in Moscow, to account because he had allegedly concealed his own short-term membership in the Tbilisi "Gummet" organization and for publishing his book, "From the Recent Past." The scientific collective and the institute's party committee defended Karayev. But, on 1 June 1937, at the specific demand of the Azerbaijan NKVD, A.G. Karayev and his wife—the doctor Kh. Karayeva-Shabanova—were arrested in Moscow as "enemies of the people" and were transported under guard to Baku.

They accused his colleague Rukhulla Akhundova of Trotskyism, espionage and diversionary activities in a plot against Soviet power and, additionally, launched the criminal charge against him personally that, allegedly, when translating the works of V.I. Lenin, he "took a line of arabism and osmanism," with the aim of making it more difficult for the working masses to accept the Lenin's works.

Highly placed plenipotentiaries were sent to other regions of the country from the center with the mission of accelerating the tempo of "exposures" and of giving punishments a scope that was appropriate to directives,

but there was no reason for them to go to Azerbaijan. The vigor, with which M.D. Bagirov, his proteges and his assistants were acting, produced a sense of satisfaction on Stalin's part. In just one of the reports sent in Moscow in 1937, it was noted that 32 rayon party committee secretaries, 28 rayon executive committee chairmen, 18 peoples commissars and their deputies, 66 engineers, 8 professors, and 88 military personnel had been arrested in Azerbaijan.

The technology for obtaining confessions had been carefully worked out and approved. The inquisitors—Bagirov's comrades, the peoples commissar for internal affairs in Azerbaijan, Yu. Symbatov-Topuridze, and the morally decayed employees of the security service, A. Atakishnev, Kh. Grigoryan, T. Borshchov, S. Yemelyanov, R. Markaryan, and others, had mastered it to perfection. "Interrogations" began with a beating. They beat the arrestees with sticks, their feet, rubber truncheons, the legs of chair. They kept them for five days at a time on their feet, without giving them either food, or water, or sleep. They demanded confessions from the arrestees, forced them to sign protocols stating that they were members of counter-revolutionary organizations, and made them name their accomplices and their meeting places. If the arrestee refused, then they continued to beat him and they beat him until he, in a half-dead state, signed a falsified protocol. This was reported by a former investigator, a witness at the trial of M. D. Bagirov and his accomplices.

A person who had been imprisoned in the same cell as R. Akhundov subsequently said:

"They beat Rukhulla to the point that, after the interrogations, they literally carried him from the office of Sumbatov-Topuridze on a stretcher... We were even surprised that, being a sick person, he survived all the tortures which were inflicted upon him."

Bagirov did not only follow the course and results of an investigation. "While working in the Central Committee, Bagirov took a direct part in the questioning of arrestees and used to come for this purpose to the People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs and participated in interrogations in Sumbatov-Topuridze's office... Operations for the massive removal of citizens were conducted by Bagirov," his stooges testified in court in April 1956.

On the instructions of the all-powerful Central Committee secretary, assignments went down to the city and rayon departments of the NKVD for the arrest of so-called foreign elements. The instructions named the numbers of people to be removed and defined categories of "enemies of the people." Supplementary lists followed in the wake of the basic lists. Large, impressive cases were to Bagirov's liking; he wanted to "prevent" far-flung plots prepared to incite uprisings. Thus, the "Shemakhinskiy Case," the "Ismayllinskiy Case," the "Sal'yanskiy Case,"... were invented. Provocateurs tossed weapons, shells, machine-gun belts, grenades into the

homes, the barns, and the gardens of peasants. Then, operational groups carried out general searches and arrests of rank and file kolkhoz workers and of rayon party and soviet workers. In the villages of Angikheren and Leninabad, in Shemakhinskiy Rayon, all of the male population was repressed; in the village of Kyurtmashi, in Ismayllinskiy Rayon, they arrested 67 persons.

Horried by the activities of Sumbatov-Topuridze's agents, the chairman of the Shemakhinskiy Rayon executive committee, Museib Novruzov secured an interview with M.D. Bagirov. "This is necessary!", Bagirov hurled at him and, after striking him in the face, drove him out of the office. On the very same day, they arrested Novruzov. A large part of the peasants accused of belonging to insurrection movements were shot even without the show of a trial.

By the same methods, the "Oil Case," the "Kaspar Case," the Molodezhensk Case" and many others were fabricated. Some enterprises and plants were left without a single specialist, master, qualified, and even beginning workers turned out to be "enemies." Representatives of the creative intelligentsia disappeared forever after ending up in the torture chambers.

While carrying out repressions and accusing boring combine secretaries and drilling equipment operators alike of preparing to murder Stalin, Molotov, and Voroshilov, Bagirov also did not forget about "strengthening" his own authority, about enhancing his own personal importance. According to interrogation protocols, 33 terrorist acts supposedly were plotted against him. On falsified maps, stars were used to indicate locations at the railroad station and in city institutions where the plotters, the "traitors to the party and the people," intended to kill the "beloved leader of Azerbaijan's bolsheviks."

Afire with malice toward Nariman Narimanov, Bagirov did everything so that mere mention of his name would be deemed sedition.

The executioner took pleasure in informing the entire country about the first results of his fruitful activity and, on 27 April 1938, an article of his was published in PRAVDA:

"Created and nurtured by comrade Stalin, the Azerbaijan bolshevik organization has carried out and is carrying out an resolute struggle for the Leninist-Stalinist purity of its own ranks. With the help of the glorious workers of the NKVD, the fascist cut-throats of the right-wing Trotskiyite and bourgeois nationalist camp have been utterly routed. Henchmen of counter-revolution and agents of foreign intelligence were making deals with our great Soviet motherland and wanted to tear an integral, an organic part from it—Soviet Azerbaijan, to sell the Azerbaijan people into servitude to the fascist cannibals."

Beriya gained Stalin's favor not only because he made a success out of servility, but also because he convinced the "Leader of the People" that he was prepared, without a second thought, to shield him with his own body. Having pushed aside and slandered the people who had stood together with Lenin at the beginnings of the revolution and who had carried it out in October 1917, Stalin promoted himself as Lenin's sole heir, as the deserving continuer of his teachings and his work. He needed to convince the country and world that the Bolshevik Party, from the very beginning, was created by Lenin and Stalin, that, in Russia, already at the turn of the century, there had been two great centers of bolshevism. Avel Yenukidze, Mamiya Orakhalashvili, Sultan Medzid Efendiyev, and other old and celebrated activists of the bolshevik organization in the Transcaucasus were unable to forego the truth and invent a role for Stalin which he, in fact, had not played.

L.P. Beriya and M.D. Bagirov set about this falsification.

L.P. Beriya's book "On the Question of the History of the Bolshevik Organizations in the Transcaucasus" saw the light of day in the middle of the thirties, and some time afterwards M.D. Bagirov published his work "From the History of the Bolshevik Organization of Baku and Azerbaijan." Having given his senior partner his due, Bagirov gave a precise indication of Beriya's purpose in writing his work: "Exceptional service to the party and the country belongs to one of the true scholars and cohorts of comrade Stalin—Lavrentiy Beriya, who, in his remarkable work 'On the Question of the History of the Bolshevik Organizations in the Transcaucasus' has, with extraordinary force and clarity, portrayed the revolutionary activity of comrade Stalin in the Transcaucasus, his role as a founder and leader of bolshevism who, together with Lenin, created a militant proletarian party of a new type."

Bagirov developed the themes set forth in Beriya's book as they applied to Azerbaijan and supplemented them with facts from the lives and activities of a number of outstanding bolsheviks, which now became pages in Stalin's biography. What was done by Lenin and his envoys in the Caucasus was, without a glimmer of conscience, transferred to "Koba." The conclusion reached concerning the pre-revolutionary period of I.V. Stalin's activities was a categorical one: "For all these successes, the bolshevik organization of Baku and Azerbaijan was indebted to the wise leadership of the great founder of bolshevism in the Transcaucasus, comrade Stalin."

And what songs of praise were sung to Stalin in Bagirov's book?

"To talk about comrade Stalin means to talk about the great Marx-Engels-Lenin-Stalinist teachings, about the enrichment and development of these all-powerful teachings; it means to talk about a living Lenin, for Lenin lives on in our own, beloved, great Stalin—in this genius of a theoretician and thinker, this organizer and leader of communism!"



Bagirov built up steam in his exaggeration of Stalin's personality cult, in creating out of him an idol for nationwide worship. In each public address, in every document coming from his pen, he declared in solemn tones that Azerbaijan was indebted to Stalin for the development of its oil, its industry, and its cotton production. It was declared that "the cultivation of subtropical crops in Azerbaijan was begun at the personal initiative of comrade Stalin. Stalin showed that both the climatic and the soil conditions on the south-western coast of the Caspian sea are favorable for tea!" The genius of a leader turned out to be interested not only in the Azerbaijan's theaters, but also provided sage advice on how to best organize cultural celebrations in Moscow. And municipal services in Baku flourished solely thanks to the intense attention and untiring personal concern of the great leader.

In removing the heroes of the October Revolution from the historical scene, Stalin could count on the assistance of people like Beriia and Bagirov. A hindrance to the great leader was Nikolay Krylenko, who enjoyed colossal popularity in the party and among the people. A participant in the battles at the barricades in 1895 and a member of the Petrograd Military Revolutionary Committee in 1917, Krylenko, as the supreme commander and peoples commissar for military affairs, was made a member of the first Leninist council of peoples commissars. Krylenko, of course, had no doubts concerning the extent of Stalin's real influence on the events of October and the civil war. Official propaganda, however, was maintaining with greater and greater insistence that the October Revolution was accomplished under the Stalin's leadership and that we are indebted to Stalin for almost all victories in the civil war.

To connect Krylenko, the USSR peoples commissar for justice, to the Trotskiy-Zinovyev or to the Trotskiy-Bukharin groups seemed to be an impossible task, as, indeed Nikolay Vasilyevich had never participated in any kind of opposition. Bagirov was assigned the delicate mission of discrediting Krylenko in a subtle way, of making him, a state official, appear comical in the eyes of the masses.

In January 1938, M. D. Bagirov addressed a session of the USSR Supreme Soviet and devoted the main part of his speech to the people's commissar for justice.

"Comrade Krylenko is involved with questions of the Peoples Commissariat for Justice along with other ones. Direction of the Peoples Commissariat for Justice requires a great deal of initiative and a serious attitude toward it. If comrade Krylenko previously devoted a large part of his time to tourism and alpine sport, now he is devoting his time to the game of chess...It is nonetheless necessary that we know with whom we are dealing in the person of comrade Krylenko—with a mountain climber or with the People's Commissar for Justice? I am convinced

that comrade Molotov will take this into consideration when proposing the new staffing of the Council of Peoples Commissars to the Supreme Soviet."

Nikolay Krylenko, who, while engaged with activities of state, was also an ardent enthusiast of athletics and sport within our country and had been the organizer of and spirit behind important chess tournaments, ceased to be a people's commissar and, in June 1938, they shot him.

Also included in Bagirov's bloody accounts book during the same year of 1938 was the extremely prominent military commander, Marshal of the Soviet Union A.I. Yegorov. After having maligned M. Tukhachevskiy, I. Yakir and other celebrated military leaders, Stalin removed Yegorov from leadership of the General Staff and sharply demoted him. The Marshal arrived in the South and assumed the duties of commander of the Transcaucasus military okrug. Bagirov understood that, with Beriia's support, he could now deal with the disgraced military chief. This would not upset the plans of Stalin, who was out to destroy the personnel of the Red Army, and he, Bagirov, could satisfy his own thirst for revenge. He had not forgotten his earlier run-ins with Aleksandr Ilich Yegorov who, in the spring of 1923, had been head of the Red Army in the Caucasus. At the time, the chairman of the Azerbaijan Cheka, M. D. Bagirov, had attempted to interfere in the operations of troops suppressing counter-revolutionary uprisings. Yegorov had put a stop to this feeble initiative and had telegraphed the corps commander, A.I. Todorskiy: "The responsibility for operational leadership against openly operating bands, for the decisiveness and speed of their destruction, lies entirely with you, and interference in this aspect of the matter on the part of anyone at all is impermissible." After the band had been routed, bypassing Todorskiy and hoping to win the favor with the troops, Bagirov ordered that the trophies—horses, cattle, and foodstuffs—be distributed not to the local peasants, but to the Red Army soldiers and commanders. A.I. Todorskiy did not allow this. Approving of the position of his corps commander, Yegorov had a stern talk with Bagirov and informed Kirov about the conflict. And Bagirov had not forgiven A.I. Yegorov for this. The marshal stayed in his position as commander of the Transcaucasus military okrug for a total of two weeks in 1938. He shared the fate of his military comrades—Tukhachevskiy, Blyukher, Yakir, Uboryevich, Primakov, Korek.

Now, in a time of glasnost and freedom of opinion, we are interesting ourselves more and more not only with the personality of Stalin and the mechanism of his dictatorship, but also with those who were counted among his comrades-in-arms, who were on his team. Diametrically opposed points of view regarding their place and significance within the system of Stalinist authoritarian rule are being discussed in the press today. Some writers consider even the members of the Politburo during the period of cult of Stalin to have been "pawns" in his political game; others are inclined to



inordinately exaggerate their role in the development and implementation of the excesses which ran counter to the plans, strategy and tactics of Leninism.

The truth seems to lie somewhere in the middle.

The activities of M.D. Bagirov himself lay entirely in the mainstream of Stalinist ideas, of everyday Stalinist practice, and he was by no means a weak-willed tool in the hands of a tyrant. Within his own region, given to him as a kind of payment for services rendered, Bagirov considered himself a feudal lord and ruled according to his own distorted rationale and desire. Because he was harnessed to the same team as Beriya, even all-union ministers trembled before him.

In the postwar years, as well, M.D. Bagirov ruled arbitrarily, fostered an atmosphere of suspicion and fear, and made sort work of those he found objectionable. Thus, he drove to suicide the extremely talented scholar and philosopher Geidar Guseynov, a man capable of brilliant and bold thought. Hundreds, thousands of people were arrested and exiled without any justification. And this was again done under the flag of heightened vigilance. "We have the cadres, but certain of them suffer from such a serious deficiency as excessive trustfulness and display a carelessness in their work that is uncharacteristic of bolsheviks," M.D. Bagirov said in January 1949 at the 17th Azerbaijan CP Congress.

Shortly before the congress, Bagirov himself gave those around him a brilliant "sample" of vigilance, resourcefulness, and refined guile. Being on guard, demonstrating vigilance, he was able to deflect from himself a threat which came from Stalin himself. Angered by the flow of complaint letters from Azerbaijan, Stalin ordered the minister of state control, L. Mekhlis, to send an official commission to Baku. It was headed by deputy all-union minister Yemelyanov. Forewarned in good time by Lavrentiy Pavlovich, Bagirov took appropriate measures. The members of the commission were placed under surveillance, their telephone conversations were intercepted, and note was made of all the people who made statements to the inspectors. Information that had been collected by the commission became known: a criminal expenditure of the "oil fund," luxury at government dachas, corruption of people close to M.D. Bagirov. It was necessary to make haste, and Yemelyanov along with another leading state control worker, Belakhov, who were not indifferent to feminine beauty, were "helped" to make the acquaintance of two lovelies on the street. Then they accused the temptresses of espionage on behalf of an overseas power. Compromising materials concerning the contacts of the high-level inspectors with the "foreign agents" were sent to Moscow. The commission was recalled.

Mir Dzhafar Bagirov seemed to have reached the peak of his administrative positions in the spring of 1953. Immediately after the death of Stalin, he was chosen a candidate member of the CPSU Central Committee Presidium. But this was an illusory advancement upwards.

Beriya, bursting to usurp power, had special intentions for his old associate and like-thinker. Obviously on the basis of an agreement with Beriya, who was preparing a coup, Bagirov changed seats to the chair of republic's Council of Ministers chairman.

The fall of Beriya also foreordained the fall of Bagirov. In June 1953, at a joint plenum of the Azerbaijan CP Central Committee and the Baku City party committee, M.C. Bagirov was removed from his post and dropped from membership in the Central Committee. The decision that was approved made note that: "Over the course of a prolonged period of time, a shameful style of leadership developed on the part of former CP Central Committee secretary M.D. Bagirov." He was charged with improper methods of selecting personnel, with substituting crude management by orders and decrees for party leadership, with trampling the rights of bureau members and members of the Central Committee, with forbidding even the slightest criticism directed at himself, and with one-man decision-making regarding even the most important questions.

For his misdeeds, Bagirov would answer later. In the summer of 1953, two delegations of Azerbaijan's young oil workers travelled to Baku, to the Bashkir area, and to Kuybyshev Oblast. The author of these lines, at that time a Komsomol journalist, was in one of these delegations. In Ufa, Tuymazy, and Oktyabrskiy we met with our landsmen—the flower of Azerbaijan's petroleum industry. Prominent commanders of production, they had been driven out of Baku by Bagirov and were hiding from his vengeance in Bashkir. They thirstily cross-examined us young people about the city, the republic, now rid of Bagirov's despotism.

In Kuybyshev, the other delegation took it into its head to drop in on the newly named deputy chief of the Kuybyshevneft association, Mir Dzhafar Bagirov. He received the young men with affected cordiality and began to tell that, thinking over his past mistakes, he was intensively studying the works of V.I. Lenin. Accustomed to act pharisaically, he also dissembled on this occasion.

From 12 to 26 April 1956, at the club imeni Dzerzhinskiy in Baku, the military collegium of the USSR Supreme Soviet, under the chairmanship of Lieutenant General of Justice A. Cheptsov, examined the case of the crimes of M.D. Bagirov and his confederate. The chief prosecutor was USSR Procurator General Yuriy Andreyevich Rudenko, who had earlier served as prosecutor from the Soviet Union at the Nuremberg trials.

The court sessions at the Dzerzhinskiy club were open and passes were issued to a wide public. In his final statement, Bagirov, acknowledging the crimes that had been committed and not asking for leniency, nonetheless tried to whitewash himself before history, declaring that he was not an enemy of the party or an enemy of the country.

But he was an enemy of the party and of country, one who inflicted incalculable harm on society. And, in the memory of the people, he, like Beriya as well, will always remain a personification of evil!

And, on this note, I would like to conclude my study of the phenomenon of M.D. Bagirov, the history of his rule which cost laboring Azerbaijan so dearly. Everything connected with the long years of Stalinism, with the

methods and approaches of Mir Dzhafar Bagirov and L.P. Beriya, with the morals implanted by them, made itself felt during the times of stagnation.

With the advent of glasnost, while breathing the air of democracy, we can tell the whole truth, without any reservations and deletions, about that which burdened us in the past.

So that such a thing can never be repeated!

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[Excerpt from book "Glazami cheloveka moego pokoleniya (Razmyshleniya o I.V. Staline)" [Through the Eyes of a Person of My Generation (Reflections on I.V. Stalin)] by Konstantin Simonov]

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[Excerpt]

February 27, 1979

In the summer of 1937 Vladimir Petrovich Stavskiy—at the time secretary of the Union and devoting a quite considerable attention to our Literary Institute—supported the idea that several prose writers—our students Lev Shapiro, Vsevolod Sablin and Zinoviy Fazin—travel around the scenes of events from the civil war in the north Caucasus and write a collective documentary booklet on Sergo Ordzhonikidze. My comrades attracted me to the idea as well—I don't remember if it was because I wanted to try my hand at prose or if it was because I assumed that there would be room for verses about Ordzhonikidze in the booklet and, in their opinion, I could write them—anyway, I joined the trio as a fourth.

Stavskiy not only approved of the idea, but even helped us, taking us to the Moscow apartment of the then-secretary of either the north Caucasus or the Rostov obkom—Yevdokimov—with whom he had taken part in the civil war at some time. We visited this sullen and somewhat gloomy person for several hours, it seemed to me, thinking about something else, far away, that made him either morose or depressed somehow, but therein, responding to the recollections of Stavskiy, also recalling some details of the times that were of interest to us.

Everything was decided, and we were to have left already when suddenly after class I was called to see Stavskiy, told that I was to go to see him immediately at the Writers' Union. I was not yet a member of the union, I was just a student, the author of several cycles of verse printed in various journals and a single poem.

"So tell me, what kind of un-Soviet conversations are you having over there at the Literary Institute? You're going to go write about Ordzhonikidze, but in your conversations you extol the White Guards," Stavskiy began in this vein, and I was literally mute with surprise, because I had had no un-Soviet discussions with anyone, had extolled no White Guards and in general did not understand what was going on.

"I have here certain information about you," said Stavskiy. "Let's get the truth out—that's the only way you and I can have a discussion."

But although I was completely disconcerted by this beginning, in fact the only way to speak the truth was simply to deny what Stavskiy was asking me about, that which someone had told him about me, although I couldn't imagine who.

The conversation went on for ten minutes, maybe fifteen, and ended with the fact that I did not acknowledge what I could not acknowledge, I did not relate what I could not relate, because there was nothing, while Stavskiy grew angry and said that so be it, then, the three would go, but you won't. There's nothing for you to write about Ordzhonikidze, since you don't even want to speak truthfully with me here. You propagandize counter-revolutionary verse, you understand, and you intend to follow in the footsteps of Ordzhonikidze. He said that after me at the end.

I left him quite depressed with all this, and I would next see him in Mongolia, at Khalkhin-Gol, two years later, in the role of the man who had first, as they say, put me under fire or, in any case, into the field of fire, and several days there, at the front, he addressed me like a somewhat coarse but caring nanny.

But all that was later, and that day it was as I remember it, although, perhaps, I don't remember the exact words that were spoken, the words were in fact a little different, softer or harsher. I remember my spiritual state much more precisely. It was heavy, very heavy, and the last sentence of Stavskiy spun around in my head, leading to some thought as yet not understood, a sentence that I eulogized counter-revolutionary poets. Suddenly I remembered—it dawned on me—I remembered two or three conversations, quite recently, on recent evenings, with our new seminar leader who had come and spoken heart to heart first with one and then another of us, obviously getting acquainted with us, as we took it.

I was at the time keen on Kipling. I had had several translations from Kipling printed in MOLODAYA GVARDIYA, and it had seemed to go well for me. And I suddenly remembered that the last, the second, it seems, conversation with our seminar leader on some bench or in some street near the Herzen house had begun with the verses of Kipling and why I liked them. I liked their courageous style, their soldier's severity, sharpness and clearly expressed masculine principles, masculine and soldierly. When I said why I liked Kipling, he began asking me what my attitude was toward Gumilev. I was quite indifferent toward Gumilev, of the acmeists I preferred Mandelstam. I liked only some verses of Gumilev, but compared to Kipling his verses seemed to me to be aesthete, less soldierly and less masculine overall. In general, Kipling pushed Gumilev aside for me, although, it would seem I should have liked the poetry of Gumilev according to my tastes. Later, after this discussion of Gumilev ("Well, it is wrong that you do not like Gumilev, are not attracted to him, although he is a counter-revolutionary, he is a poet, and as a poet you cannot help but like him"), the reading of verses by



Gumilev began, which my interlocutor knew by heart. I knew some, did not know others, some I liked, some I remembered liking before—"The Lost Trolley," "Leopard," something else, I don't remember what—and I said that I liked those verses of Gumilev, but I really liked Kipling nonetheless.

That is roughly the whole conversation that could have elicited that last sentence of Stavskiy that was thrown out after me. There had been no other discussion with anyone else. There simply had not been. This meant that this person, the new seminar leader, had played a trick, had not told me the truth. After all, he himself had pestered me with Gumilev, he himself had told me that although he was a counter-revolutionary, he was a good poet, he himself read his verses, he himself had made me say that yes, Gumilev, of course, had some good verse, although I liked Kipling better anyway.

Why had he told all this to Stavskiy in a manner different from what had actually happened? He himself, drawing me into this conversation, told it to Stavskiy in such a way that Stavskiy wanted from me, demanded, that I acknowledge un-Soviet conversations, and as a result did not believe me and had left me out of the trip with my comrades to the north Caucasus, where I wanted to go so badly. What made him do this? Did he want to get ahead or what, to show how vigilant he was, or was he somehow forced to slander me, but why, I had done nothing bad to him, he seemed to have a good attitude toward me.

Fortunately, we had only one seminar session after this, but I could not force myself to look at this person, it was painful to see him. I hurried to leave as quickly as possible so that he could not begin talking with me. Thinking later about this story I have remembered so well and for so long, I saw in it a provocation with the aid of which he evidently was reinforcing or wanted to reinforce his own situation, a somehow unhappy, obviously, or confused person, in addition to everything else seriously ill, hardly moving. I never saw him again. When I returned to classes in the fall, he had disappeared, been arrested and, probably, had died somewhere. I never heard his name from anyone again.

That is how life strangely taught us something and confused us year after year.

We had long been scraping by in various rooms rented by our family, we rented from those who had gone somewhere to work by special permit. Where we were living the first winter in Moscow, in the apartment belonging to the sister of my stepfather and her relatives, her husband's brother was arrested. Arrested again, the first time had been in 1930, before the stepfather, and released several months later, like the stepfather, but he was quite high up in the military, a military commissar by rank, the first Soviet attaché to Turkey, a professor at the military academy and a schoolmate of Tukhachevskiy at the Corps of Pages—it seems so.

In the 1920s, when we sometimes went to Moscow for a week or a week and a half and got a room for that time at our aunt's—there were no other possibilities—I saw the tall and handsome Tukhachevskiy come to visit Ivan Aleksandrovich (her brother-in-law was called Ivan Aleksandrovich).

Ivan Aleksandrovich had been released then, but he did not return to the army, he taught a course in economic geography on the staff of some higher educational institution. He was a very educated man. Suddenly he was imprisoned for a second time. This was either before the trial of Tukhachevskiy, Uborevich and the others or after, I don't remember, but roughly at that time. Mother was aggrieved, she said that it could not be that Ivan Aleksandrovich was guilty of something, my stepfather was gloomily silent, not wishing to discuss the topic at all, and I, what did I think?

Like the majority of people, probably, in any case, the majority of young people of my generation, I thought then that the trial of Tukhachevskiy and the other military was probably correct. Who could convict and execute without guilt such people as they, as Marshals Yegorov and Tukhachevskiy, the deputy people's commissar, the chief of the general staff—about the others I had less of an impression than of them, but in my youthful consciousness they were the flower of our army, its command staff—who would arrest them and who would sentence them to be shot if they were not guilty? There was, of course, no doubt in my mind that there was some terrible plot against Soviet power. There was no doubt because there were no alternatives—I am speaking of the times: either they were guilty, or it could not be comprehended. I felt that they were probably guilty, that Ivan Aleksandrovich was probably guilty, that he had not been guilty before and they released him, but now, they did not release him because he was guilty. My stepfather was released then because he was not guilty of anything. Today he is working at the military department of the institute, nothing is happening with him.

It was, by the way, a little terrible to think, it was terrible to approach the idea, because what happened with Ivan Aleksandrovich was happening more and more often with someone somewhere, but these were just echoes, these were people I did not know, about whom I had no notions.

That is how vaguely—now in detail, now with gaps—that I recall that time for which, probably, if one were to be honest, one cannot forgive either Stalin or anyone else, including oneself. Not that you did something, had yourself, you didn't do anything bad, in any case, at first glance, but it was bad that you got used to this. For you, a twenty-two- or twenty-three-year-old person, what happened in 1937 and 1938, which now seems unbelievable and monstrous, gradually somehow came to be the norm, became almost the usual. You lived among all of this like a deaf person, as if you didn't hear that they were

shooting and killing all around, that people were disappearing around you. As if all of this could be explained, even though it was inexplicable. Probably, in investigating the ideas of the time among my generation, or more accurately trying to investigate them, and first and foremost, of course, the ideas themselves, one must somehow draw a line between certain instances of complete faith in the correctness of what was happening and others—half-faith, instinctive doubts—both greater and lesser.

I believed in the military trial. I could imagine nothing other than what actually happened in reality. Public trials elicited a certain feeling of fright—from the readiness to tell everything about oneself and to acknowledge everything that moved from deposition to deposition. It would be strange to doubt what these people were saying about themselves—all this was arranged in a generally quite harmonious and consistent picture for the times. And, at the same time, why did they all admit everything, why did they all feel themselves guilty, no one insisted that he had been right to act as he did?

Toward certain people—such as Zinovyev—I had, for example, a feeling of some old hostility, perhaps from my Leningrad impressions and conversations, because he left an especially bad memory of himself in Leningrad. I had a certain liking, on the other hand, for Bukharin and, to a certain extent, for Rykov, especially the former. I remembered his concluding word after a discussion of a report on poetry at the 1st Writers' Congress. We, the future students of the Literary Institute, had received tickets to the gallery, each for some single session. I got that one. At first our poets went after Bukharin, and I liked that; they spoke scathingly, boldly, quarrelsomely—that suited me. But when Bukharin gave an answering word, he also spoke scathingly, boldly and quarrelsomely, and this also suited me, I liked the way he was concluding the debate after the speech. He was the editor of *IZVESTIYA* when I was at the Literary Institute, and he printed the verse of some institute students. He printed my verse twice as well. I never saw him personally, I went to the literature and art departments.

One time I was to see him—Bukharin had read some new verse of mine that had been submitted to *IZVESTIYA*, it interested him and he wanted to speak with me—and I was assigned a meeting hour which, of course, I had a great interest in. Since I had earlier arranged to meet my mother at that exact time, I ran by her place beforehand and left her a note. But the meeting did not take place. Bukharin was occupied with something or went somewhere, and I thus never saw him. And I saw this note at my mother's in 1944 when she returned from Molotov, where she had taken part of the literary archives of my youth and everything I had written whatsoever. I stopped by once and she, looking through my old letters, suddenly said, "Here's a note, I wanted to check with you. I kept it, but maybe it's not needed."

The note was quite simple, the note of a beginning poet, a student who had to meet the editor of a large newspaper interested in his verse. But in light of what later happened to Bukharin, the note looked a little awful. At the time, at my mother's in 1944, I shuddered when I read it and thought that she had had it since 1935 or the beginning of 1936. I wrote in the note—I remember it by heart—"Dear mother, I am not coming. I have been called to see Nikolay Ivanovich Bukharin at precisely five o'clock. Why—I cannot yet say, it is still a secret, I will tell you later. Your son." That was the whole note. The secret, which I had not yet told my mother, was that I had submitted new verse to *IZVESTIYA* and they seemingly intended to print it, as twice before. I wanted to make it a surprise for her.

Of course, at that time, in 1944, I tore up the note. By that time I was already a seasoned man who had been in two wars—first a small one, then the big one—a lieutenant colonel decorated with the Combat Order of the Red Banner, a military correspondent, a writer who had written "Wait for Me," "Russian People" and "Days and Nights," had received two Stalin prizes, who began thinking in hindsight with horror: given what had happened then, in 1936, 1937 and 1938, if someone had looked into my mother's archives and seen that note—come and explain about that time, what secret you had regarding Bukharin. In those times, things could have ended up badly not only for a student from the Literary Institute who got his verse printed in *IZVESTIYA*, but for his parents as well. And not only then, but in 1944, when I had my discussion with my mother, when I tore up the note, had some bad person been nosing around in it, little good would have come of it as well. I said nothing to my mother, only shook my head. She said nothing in reply, only shrugged, as if to say that she was probably to blame, but her habit was to leave everything intact, everything I wrote to her, for her it was stronger than any other thoughts or fears.

However, what I said about Zinoviev, Bukharin and Rykov also relates to some very individual nuances of peoples' perceptions. The chief doubts began to arise simply from the massiveness of what was happening. It must be taken into account now, in remembering that time, that we are speaking of mass illegal repressions, when things did not happen in the courts as much as they were simply decided somewhere, by some three-man commissions, that somebody heard about from somewhere, and people disappeared. And of course I, with my world view, with what I knew, with whom I knew—I had an idea, perhaps, that one person was disappearing out of many, many hundreds, and I knew nothing about any others, as the others did not know about others still. But even under that condition, a sense of the massiveness of what was happening arose, the feeling arose that all of this could not be right, that some errors were occurring. We sometimes spoke of this among ourselves. Later, when Yezhov from the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs became the People's Commissar of Water Transport, and then disappeared altogether, the justice

of these doubts was seemingly confirmed on a nationwide scale. The popular word "Yezhovshchina" appeared not after the 20th Congress, as it sometimes probably seemed to people of other, younger generations, it appeared sometime between the disappearance of Yezhov and the beginning of the war, it appeared when some of those who had disappeared started to return, it appeared as if by itself, from the earth, and I was not especially afraid to utter it aloud, as I recall. I now think that Stalin, with the information at his disposal, knew the dissemination and currency of that word, and no one was called to account for using it. Obviously so. Obviously, it suited Stalin at some moment to link everything that had happened in prior years first with Yagoda, and then his heir Yezhov. It suited him that all of this was consolidated in the word "Yezhovshchina."

By the way, in speaking of and recalling that time, one cannot skirt our impressions at that time—from afar, of course, by hearsay—of Beria. The appointment of Beria was seen as if Stalin had called a person from Georgia that he knew to execute the harsh duties connected with the position, a person he apparently trusted and who was to fix what Yezhov had done where it was not too late. It must be remembered, after all, that those who were let out between the end of 1938 and the beginning of the war were let out under Beria. There were many such people. I don't know what percentage of other spheres, but in the History of the Great Patriotic War it has been written that it was in namely those years, that is under Beria, that over a quarter of the military arrested under Yezhov were released. There were thus rumors that Beria, restoring justice, was trying to correct what Yezhov had done. The grounds were quite substantive and, probably, the majority of us, me in any case, would never have dreamed of the future activity of Beria then. I, for instance, had not the least impression on a real scale of what he had done in Georgia before coming to Moscow during the period of Yezhovshchina.

So, in our minds Stalin was correcting the mistakes committed beforehand by Yezhov and others, all the others who had committed follies. Beria had been appointed to correct these errors. When Meyerhold and Babel were arrested and disappeared under him in 1939, then I will state honestly that despite the scale of these names in literature and the theater and the upheavals that these unexpected—even for the times—arrests caused, unexpected and, in that environment, isolated, it was namely because they were isolated and because they were under Beria, who was correcting the mistakes made by Yezhov, that there was acute bewilderment: could it be, in fact, that these people, imprisoned in 1939, were guilty of something? The others, imprisoned under Yezhov, many of them, probably, were not guilty, no one knows how all of that was, but these, whom no one touched under Yezhov, are suddenly arrested when they have started correcting what happened—maybe there were real reasons for it?

I don't know about others, but I had such thoughts at the time, and I do not see any reason to forget that I had them. That would be an oversimplification of the complexity of the spiritual climate of the time.

At the end of the summer of 1938 I became a member of the Writers' Union. That year two, if not three, of my first books came out, and I felt myself to be a professional man of letters overall. Naturally, by that time I knew more of what was happening in literary circles, including dramatic events.

The most dramatic of these events for me personally was quite unexpected and somehow unseemly arrest and disappearance of Mikhail Koltsov. He was arrested at the very end of 1938, when arrests were not happening in the circle of writers, he was arrested after a speech in the large writers' hall, where he was received with enthusiasm. As I learned later, he went from there to PRAVDA, where he was a member of the editorial board, and he was arrested there—practically in Mekhlis' office.

We had all read Koltsov's "Spanish Diary." We read it with much more interest than anything that anyone else wrote about Spain, even including the features of Ehrenburg. Fadeyev and Aleksey Tolstoy have written of "Spanish Diary." A second book was prepared for publication in NOVYY MIR, it was just being assembled, and it was awaited with impatience. Koltsov was for us a sort of a symbol of everything that Soviet people did in Spain. I learned considerably later that very many of our military who were in Spain were later arrested—some were freed, and others perished—but we found out about Koltsov right at the time. The rumor of his disappearance spread instantly. It could not be understood, it could not be believed—that he was guilty of something—it was impossible or almost impossible. And in general, it was not believed, this must be stated without exaggeration, as I spoke without diminishment of other instances when I believed and it was easy to believe.

It is very typical that from the very beginning of the Great Patriotic War there were rumors that Koltsov had been seen, first on this front and then at another, including at the Karelian front, he had been released, returned from the camps and was in the active army. Witnesses to this were found—more precisely, supposed witnesses—who told someone about it, and that someone told someone else, and these rumors appeared again and again, reaching us, reaching me, for example, over the course of the first two years of the war. There was a basis for these rumors: the return to the active army of a number of military people who later distinguished themselves at the front, they were heard of remotely, they had disappeared in the pre-war years, no one knew of their return to the army before the war, but during the war their names appeared in the lists of those decorated and then in the orders. Rumors of the appearance of Koltsov at the front were distinguished by an especial persistence associated with the particular sympathy for him and his



personality, his role in Spanish events and his "Spanish Diary" and the impossibility of believing that this person could be guilty of something.

In 1949, when I traveled with the first delegation of Soviet cultural figures to China—Fadeyev was the delegation leader, and I was his deputy—late in the evening in a hotel in Peking Fadeyev, in a moment of candor—and it must be stated that on such topics as this he spoke rarely, very rarely, with me, perhaps, just three times—after I, I don't remember, for some reason, had gotten talking about Koltsov and that I still could not believe that what happened could have happened to him, told me that he, Fadeyev, at the same time, a week or two after the arrest of Koltsov, had written a short note to Stalin that many writers, both communists and non-party members, could not believe in the guilt of Koltsov, and that he, Fadeyev, himself could also not believe it and felt it was necessary to report the widespread impression of what had happened in literary circles to Stalin and requested that he receive him.

After a while Stalin did receive Fadeyev.

"So, you don't believe that Koltsov is guilty?" Stalin asked him.

Fadeyev said that he could not believe it and did not want to believe it.

"And I, you think, believe it, I, you think, want to believe it? I didn't want to, but I had to."

After those words Stalin summoned Poskrebyshev and ordered him to give Fadeyev something to read that had been put aside for him.

"Go ahead, read it, then come see me and tell me your impressions," Stalin then told him, as I recall the conversation with Fadeyev.

Fadeyev went with Poskrebyshev into another room, sat at a table and laid before him the two sheets of Koltsov's testimony.

The testimony, in the words of Fadeyev, was awful, with admissions of ties to Trotskyites and Ponomovites.

"And the things that were written there," said Fadeyev bitterly, evidently, as I took it, not wishing to touch on any personal details. "I read it and couldn't believe my eyes. When I had looked over all of this, I was summoned to Stalin once again, and he asked me: 'Well, do you have to believe now?'"

"Have to," said Fadeyev.

"If people who need an answer start asking, you can tell them what you know," concluded Stalin and with that dismissed Fadeyev.

This conversation of mine with Fadeyev took place in 1949, some three years and more before the death of Stalin. Fadeyev did not just comment on his conversation with Stalin, but he related it with a passion that you can take as you wish. In one direction of your thinking, it could be taken as passion from the fact that he had had to be convinced of the guilt of such a person as Koltsov, and in the other it can be perceived as passion from the lack of escape from the situation at the time for Fadeyev himself, in the depths of his soul nonetheless not believing the guilt of Koltsov and not trusting or, in any case, completely trusting the sheets that he read. Something in his intonation, when he said the words "The things that were written there" pushed one to think that he did not believe in Koltsov's guilt in his own heart, but he could not say so even after eleven years, in any case directly, because Koltsov was not, after all, Yezhovshchina. Yezhov was gone without a trace, this was not Yezhov but Stalin himself.

Why am I saying so much about all this, most difficult, hard to explain and to pass along even in memoirs when I am addressing the years of my own youth? After all, there was a great deal else that was nothing like this, far from all this. Precisely! That is the whole point: although many of the pages I have written up to now are somewhat in contradiction with the beginning of the manuscript, story declaration or, more precisely, the attempt to analyze the attitude of a person, or the people of my generation, toward Stalin, I cannot get by without these pages, since it is from there, from that point, that the contradictions of my internal evaluation of Stalin begin. The contradictions that had been laid down before then, muffled, put away somewhere as a result of cowardice, somewhere doggedly re-convincing oneself, elsewhere forcing oneself, not wanting to touch on it, even in thought. And the first roots of a dual attitude toward Stalin were nonetheless there, in the thirties. Realized, unrealized, half-realized, but nonetheless sprouting somewhere in the soul. And these contradictions did not come to full height, did not even put out shoots then, because, as they often say today, we did not know this then, we found all this out after the 20th Congress. Of course, we found out much only after the 20th Congress, that is true. But far from everything. There was much that could have and should have been thought about before the 20th Congress, and there were sufficient grounds for it. It was determination that was lacking far more than grounds for it.

The point is not that we didn't know anything exactly, but rather that feeling, and to some extent knowing about, the evil being done and only later, incompletely and too late corrected, and sometimes not corrected at all, we knew much more of the good. I consciously use these two very general and non-specific words—"evil" and "good"—because others do not have what was understood by them at the time.

What good was connected for us, for me especially, with the name of Stalin at the time? A great deal, almost everything, albeit because by that time almost everything

in our conception came from him and was cloaked in his name. Everything that happened in the industrialization of the country was explained by his unwavering general policy in this sphere. And there were, of course, many surprising things. The country changed before our eyes. When something didn't work out, it was because someone had impeded it. At first it was it saboteurs or the Industrial Party, and then, as it was revealed in the trials, it was the left- and right-wing opposition. But, sweeping everything from the path of industrialization, Stalin conducted it with an iron hand. He said little, did much, met many people in business, rarely gave interviews, rarely spoke in public and reached a point where his every word was weighed and considered not only here, but around the world. He spoke clearly, simply, logically; the thoughts he wanted to drum into your head he did so firmly and, in our conception, never promised anything he didn't later do.

We were the pre-war generation, we knew that war was coming. As first it was depicted as a war with the capitalist world in general—in what form, in what form of coalition, it was difficult to predict: we were threatened both by our immediate neighbors—Poland, Romania, the Little Entente (this was before the coming to power of Hitler)—and in the Far East by Japan. We knew we were in a capitalist encirclement, it was in fact so, but gradually, with the occupation of Manchuria by Japan and the coming to power of Hitler, with the creation of the anti-Comintern pact, the axis of the future was being manifested more and more clearly. It was evident that we would have to fight Japan and Germany and, perhaps, Italy united with them. Poland continued to remain hostile to us, although it was incomprehensible how it could prove to be on the side of Germany, but it remained hostile to us in spite of logic nonetheless.

Repulse was given to the Chinese militarists on the CER [Chinese Eastern Railway]. We sympathized with this as boys. There was a clash with the Japanese at Hasan in which we did not retreat. Rumors then circulated that things had not gone as well there as had been written at first, but nonetheless we did not retreat. Next was Khalkhin-Gol, where I was able to visit myself and see much with my own eyes. There was some disappointment, some things did not coincide with what I expected, especially, the Japanese at first struck us from the air, before our new planes and, most importantly, our pilots with battle experience in Spain and China, appeared; at first the infantry did not operate very successfully, there were instances of panic—I did not find them, but I heard of them. Our tanks there, however, at Khalkhin-Gol, gained the upper hand, in the end the aircraft came out on top, and although the inward impression remained that our infantry there fought no better than the Japanese, in general, on the scale of the whole Khalkhin-Gol conflict, the Japanese were routed. This was an irrefutable fact, and behind it was much of what Stalin had done for the army. The fact that he was occupied with the army, arming it, supplying it, devoting much time

and effort to it, giving it the proper significance, preparing the country for battle, armed struggle under difficult conditions, was undoubted for us. As a result, therefore, notwithstanding some surprises that were unpleasant for our consciousness, we had a high regard for his activity in this area.

In addition, we fulfilled our internationalist duty in Mongolia: the treaty we had signed with the Mongols was fulfilled, we had promised to help them and we helped them to the fullest. This evoked a feeling of satisfaction. According to our notions at the time, Stalin as the leader of our country and its boss had done everything he could that was practically possible. We were convinced that if there had been no committee on non-intervention, if there had been no blockade of Spain, indulgence of the intervention in its affairs by German and Italian military contingents, the widespread import of artillery, tanks and aircraft from Germany and Italy, the republic would have been able to deal with the fascism. We, for our part, were people with a clear conscience, we had done everything we could. And personifying all of this, we lived with the feeling that Stalin had done everything he could to save the Spanish republic and to evacuate Spanish children and orphans—in general, the conception of the unwavering fulfillment of our international duty was linked with his name.

This circle of "good" that we associated in our life with the then conceptions of Stalin included the Arctic as well—the rescue of the crew of the Chelyuskin, the landing of Papanin and his comrades at the North Pole, the overflights of Chkalov and Gromov. We felt that Stalin stood behind the organization of all this, behind all of these bold enterprises, they came back to him, they reported to him on it. And the ceremonies connected with this took on a nationwide character, and it brought us closer together, with rare exceptions, with the remote and solitary figure of Stalin. We did not imagine the possibility, the very possibility, of the accusations later made against Stalin in connection with the death of Kirov. I later heard them from the rostrum with my own ears along with other people as almost undoubted suspicions, although later no one has been able to prove their doubtlessness, as far as I know. We didn't even imagine the possibility of all this. But we knew how Stalin had walked behind the coffin of Kirov. We didn't know what in reality had happened in Stalin's family, we did not know the tragic turn of events in relations with his wife, the rumors of him as the perpetrator of her death did not reach us, but we knew that he walked behind her coffin and we sympathized with his loss.

In his speeches, Stalin was categorical but simple. With people—this we sometimes saw in the films—he bore himself simply. He dressed simply, the same way. There was nothing for show about him, he had no outward pretensions of greatness or being elect. And that corresponded to our conceptions about how a man at the head

of the party should be. As a result, Stalin was all of this together: all of these feelings, all of these positive features, both real and sketched in by us, of the leader of the party and the state.

It was very difficult therein to refrain from the temptation to shift the responsibility for bad things onto someone else. Stalin was especially consistent in that sense. The excesses of mass collectivization brought on the article "Dizziness from Success," and "Dizziness from Success" not only expanded the number of the guilty, not only shifted everything that had happened to a whole different level of causality than could have been imagined for the scale of what had happened, but even urged people like me, far from comprehending all of the processes that had transpired in the villages, to an unambiguous and useful decision that was useful to Stalin: it was namely at the level that he wrote about that the errors had occurred. And if he had not stopped it, had not saved us from further errors, then they would have multiplied. He came forth for us in the role of the savior from errors, the same as he later came forward in the same role when Yezhov was replaced by Beria. Yezhov disappeared, and Stalin, as the rumors reached people like me, remote and vague rumors, somewhere, it seems, at a Central Committee plenum, had severely rebuked the people who were responsible for the errors that gave rise to the word Yezhovshchina. It would have been Stalin himself, by the way, who let it get into circulation to that extent. Although, of course, that was not the case, and soon enough the name of those two or three years that themselves comprise a brief but terrible era was born among many people and spread like a prairie fire thanks to its unfailing precision and simplicity corresponding to the previous phrase connected with Yezhov that had been in circulation—"the iron fist." They wrote about that fist and drew it, quite often.

Today it seems to me, when I recall that time, that fanning the popularity of Yezhov and his "iron fist," his "iron people's commissariat," was probably in no way restrained by Stalin and, on the contrary, more likely encouraged in foreseeing the future since, of course, he knew that an end would come sometime to the purging process, which seemed to him as both a politician and a mercilessly cruel person, obviously, inevitable: once that were so, the first fully natural defendant was ready for the subsequent period.

But I think of all this now. Then I was not thinking it, not even imagining that I could think it someday.

The pact with the Germans and the Ribbentrop's trip to Moscow, along with everything connected with it, at first made no appreciable chinks in my conceptions of Stalin, although the event itself was psychologically shattering to me as well as many of my contemporaries—many, probably, quite strongly—especially after all that had happened in Spain, after the open skirmishing with the fascists that had occurred there. There was something here that could not be understood with feelings. With the

mind—yes, with the feelings—no. Something was spinning both in the surrounding world and in us ourselves. As if we had become something different than we were; as if we had to continue to live with a different feeling about ourselves after the pact.

This first feeling and self-image, probably, would have been sharper for me if, when this was happening, I had not been in Khalkhin-Gol in the thick of the offensive and encirclement of the Japanese troops. And the point is not only that the spiritual forces and interests were swallowed up by what was happening right there—after all, this was my combat baptism as a beginning war correspondent and was associated with a multitude of forms of death, quite terrible pictures of it and a moment of personal danger. Aside from all this, there was also a feeling—I wrote about it later, trying to express it precisely, I want to repeat it here—that with the pact the danger of a blow to the back had receded. The usual feeling in living in Moscow in those years when the feeling of impending war with fascist Germany was growing was as if we were face to face with it, it was in front of us, while Japan and the Manchurian border where conflicts were always raging, Mongolia, where the Japanese had invaded, invaded in 1939 and not for the first time—there had been several prior tries—all of this was out there, behind the back. The knife in the back was there, the threat of such a blow came from Japan. When we were there, at Khalkhin-Gol, when the war was going on there, the possibility of this knife blow in the back was associated with Germany, this blow was expected from the West, it was already at our back. And suddenly there came this strange, unexpected and stunning novelty of an impending relatively peaceful period: a non-aggression pact had been concluded—with whom?—with fascist Germany.

When the war of the Germans in Poland began, all of my sympathies, like those of my colleagues on the editorial boards of the military newspapers where we worked, were on the side of the Poles, because the stronger had attacked the weaker and because the non-aggression pact was a pact, and who among us wanted a victory of fascist Germany in the beginning European war, the more so an easy one? The speed with which the Germans broke through and crossed Poland was stunning and alarming.

September 17 of 1939, the announcement of the entry of our troops into the western Ukraine and Belorussia in connection with the collapse of Poland as a state, found me still at Khalkhin-Gol. For days beforehand there had been, in my opinion, the largest air battle ever over the Mongolian steppe. There were several hundred aircraft in the air. Later, in 1950, in meetings with Georgiy Konstantinovich Zhukov, I, a little embarrassed then about what I am telling now, nonetheless told him the truth, that after these air battles over Khalkhin-Gol I never again saw an air battle over my head in which so many aircraft took part during the Great Patriotic War. He laughed and unexpectedly answered me, "And you think I did? I never did either." I recalled this because



although we encircled, blasted and in general routed, it would be no exaggeration to say, the Japanese on Mongolian territory, what would come next and whether a large war with Japan would begin was unknown, and it seemed to me then that it could be expected. And I met the fact that in Europe our troops were entering the western Ukraine and Belorussia with a feeling of unrestrained joy. One must imagine the atmosphere of all the preceding years, the Soviet-Polish war of 1920, the subsequent decades of strained relations with Poland, the settlement and resettlement of the rich Polish peasantry in the so-called eastern regions, the attempts to colonize the Ukrainian and especially the Belorussian population, White Guards bands operating from Polish territory in the 1920s, the study of the Polish language among the military as the language of one of the most probable adversaries and the trials of the Belorussian communists. In general, if one recalls all of this atmosphere, why would I not be glad that we were going to liberate the western Ukraine and western Belorussia? We were going to the line of national delimitation that had at one time, in 1920, been considered fair from an ethnic point of view, even by enemies of our country, such as Lord Kerson, remembered in the Kerson Line, from which we had had to retreat and go for peace, giving Poland the western Ukraine and Belorussia due to military defeats, behind which were the limitless exhaustion of forces during the world and civil wars, the ruin, the unvanquished Wrangel, impending Kronstadt and Antonovshchina—in general, 1920.

What transpired seemed to me to be just, and I sympathized with it. I sympathized while still in Khalkhin-Gol and in coming, weeks later and still in uniform as before, to liberated western Belorussia. I traveled across it on the eve of the elections to the national assembly, I saw with my own eyes the people who had truly been freed from a dominion they hated, I heard the conversations, I was present the first day at the session of the national assembly. I was young and inexperienced, but I nonetheless heard how and why the people in the hall applauded, why they stood up, and what was on their faces, it seems to me, could be told. There was no question for me: in western Belorussia, where I was, the Belorussian population—and they were an enormous majority—were glad of our coming and wanted it. And naturally the thought has not left my mind that is alien to much then: what if we had not made our declaration, not agreed to a demarcation line with the Germans, not gone to it, if all of that had not happened that was, obviously, one way or the other—we had to guess—connected with the non-aggression pact, then who would have entered those cities and towns, who would have occupied all of western Belorussia, who would have come 60 kilometers from Minsk, almost to Minsk itself? The Germans. No, there were no such questions for me at the time, in my eyes Stalin was right in doing this. And the fact that in practice neither England nor France, having declared war on the Germans, came to the aid of the Poles confirmed for me what had been written about the fruitlessness and lack of sincerity on their part in the

military negotiations on a treaty that could have restrained Germany from war.

There were even more recent things in memory: Munich and our readiness, together with France if she would do so, to aid Czechoslovakia—all of this was in memory and all of this confirmed that Stalin was right. Although it all seemed so, something was wrong nonetheless, some worm had twisted and sapped the soul. There was behind this an incomplete feeling—evidently a feeling and not a conception—that we had become something different somehow due to the non-aggression pact. From the point of view of the state and one's own feelings as a part of the state, everything was seemingly correct. From the point of view of one's own feelings as a person of the country that was the hope of the world, more correctly, not the whole world, but like thinkers of the world, the main hope in the fight against world fascism—we spoke then of world fascism, it was not just German for us—there was something that was not right. Something had been squandered, lost, in the former feeling. And I felt it and knew that others were feeling it.

Returning to the thoughts of the times, to the psychological feelings of a person who, in general, consciously supported Stalin and, at the same time, unconsciously did not accept something in all of this—I think now about Stalin himself. How would it be to be in those circumstances, on the one hand France and England not wanting to conclude anything that would obligate not only us, but them to a serious military treaty, and on the other hand, fascist Germany proposing a non-aggression pact and ready therein not to cross the Kerson line, not to go up to our borders, in the event of war with Poland and, on the contrary, ready to give us the opportunity to go up to that line, once proposed as a just border between us and Poland?

Stalin was deciding how it would be. Deciding by himself. He could have gotten advice, asked opinions, requested data—I do not know these circumstances and will not go into them—I know just one thing: by that time, he had ensured himself such a position in the party and the state that if he firmly decided something, he could count on there being no direct opposition to him, he would not have to defend his correctness to anyone, he was knowingly in the right as soon as he made a decision. So I now pose the question—a psychological one—did he have any inner opposition to this decision, did he have any of the feeling, even partially, that we ourselves felt here in the depths of our souls: with this decision we will become something other than what we were?

March 2, 1979

When I think about this now, it begins to seem to me that he could have had such feelings. I have no doubt that he saw the final stage of these relations with Hitlerite Germany not as a fight for life, but a fight to the death, a fight that should bring us victory. And in some way he

looked at the non-aggression pact the way our, as we called them among ourselves at the time, "sworn friends," the German fascists, did: it was a step on the path toward the future fight in which there would be no middle way out, it would be either-or, in which we must triumph.

It seems to me for some reason that he could recall the period of struggle for the conclusion of the Brest peace, the period in which Lenin had to conduct the harshest fight within the party in order to prove his correctness and conclude that peace. Stalin had no need of this, he had succeeded in putting himself in such a position that he did not have to collect votes in favor of his position—that was the difference. But perhaps the feeling of personal responsibility was the heavier for it. Decisions made in general silence or the mechanical approval that is equivalent to general silence are way more difficult than they look at first glance. In the end, if you think about it, final decisions made by one for all are the most difficult and the most terrible. The military knows this best of all. True, for them it is often caused by the direct and objective necessity of the conditions of war themselves. Stalin created the a similar necessity for himself, and he reached it along a long and bloody path. And nonetheless, saying all this, I think: did he mentally put himself in Lenin's place then, before the conclusion of the pact, during the period of the Brest peace? His speculative assumed opponents in the place of Bukharin and the left communists or the place of Trotsky? Did he maintain his determination with the thought that this obscene pact—he could certainly have mentally called it that, especially if recalling Lenin at the time—that this obscene pact was no less essential in the extant international situation than the obscene Brest peace, although associated with ideological losses, but these losses, when at the end all would end with victory over fascism, our victory and no one else's—these losses would later be returned, and then the pact would have given the breather that was essential to the accomplishment of the future tasks. To try to think naively, of course, for such a person as Stalin, to try to imagine the course of his thoughts—these conjectures, naturally, are nothing but intuitive confidence or allowances, they are unsubstantiated, and nonetheless I cannot refrain from thinking that there is a certain logic in them.

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If I were to speak of my own life, for my part it would be correct to skip seven years, to jump from August and September of 1939 to August and September of 1946, the postwar period. After all, all of the problems connected with the personality of Stalin that arose before me and other people of my generation during the first period of the war, during the course of it and after it, right away and after many years, and before and after the 20th Party Congress—all of this will ultimately comprise the basic substance and the chief portion of this manuscript and will be associated not only with personal feelings of the times, but also much more with subsequent reflection

associated with work on my postwar books, the diary of a writer "Various Days of the War" and with all the themes of the multitude of discussions that I had with many people, each of whom is in his own way incomparably closer than I and in his life encountered the topic of "Stalin and War," "Stalin and Preparations for War," "Stalin and the Beginning of the War." This, strictly speaking, is the main subject of my study and my reflection as well. It will be the main substance of the manuscript.

In order to move on to that, it seems essential to me to cross one more threshold, aside from the first, which was the story of my youthful conceptions of Stalin and of everything connected with him.

This second threshold will be some impressions, not very many but existing in my life anyway, of personal contacts with Stalin, of Stalin up close, seen with my own eyes in the literal sense of the word. All of these personal impressions are connected not with the war, but with literature, although it happened that Stalin and we as his interlocutors in this or that case came to literature as a memory of the war. I will tell about that as well.

Before going on to that part of my memoirs and the thoughts connected with it, a few words about my pre-war life and pre-war feelings between the fall of 1939 and June of 1941. I will perhaps return to this time in connection with the chief topic of my manuscript, but here I want to speak of myself at that time.

In Belostok—not the first, but the second day of sessions of the people's assembly—I was almost unconscious from a sudden high fever—over forty degrees Celsius. Already thinking poorly, I was brought to the hospital by Yevgeniy Dolmatovskiy and taken care of until I could go myself to Belostok. The hospital was on the grounds of a Polish hospital, in my troubled recollections half ours and half foreign. Then, in 1939, was the second time I almost died—I had such bad lobar pneumonia that I had a temperature of over forty for three weeks, if not more. After a while, having completed a business trip for KRASNAYA ZVEZDA, my mother came to see me—someone else, perhaps, might not have gotten through, but she had such a nature that under such circumstances she could break down walls. When I began getting better, the fever finally began to subside, there remained just a terrible weakness, but my mother was able to get me sent to Moscow for recovery. We flew from Belostok to Minsk on a medical plane, I think a P-5, and from Minsk we went by train. In Moscow they first cut my hand, because it had swollen into an enormous phlegmon after injections of camphor and theine, and had probably gotten infected somehow. I then lay at home, came to myself and then with quilted feet went to rest at a creative house in Peredelkino—there was a small house there then, it later burned down.

I am telling all of this because the establishment of Soviet power that took place then in the Baltic republics happened somehow apart from me and my consciousness. I happened into those regions after the war, in 1947, and I thought about how it all was there in 1939, in hindsight, meeting Vilis Tenisovich Latsis, someone who told me about the complexities of the times with their attendant strict restraint joined with directness and an organic hatred for rounding off the sharp edges of history.

The beginning of the Finnish war also passed me by psychologically. I will tell you truthfully that there was more of a feeling of awkwardness before those who came directly from there, from the creative house, where we lived together, for that war by our comrades—Gorbatov, Dolmatovskiy, Khatsrevin—than an intrinsic desire to be at that war. It distracted them from everything—from state tasks, strategy, the necessity of foreseeing the whole danger of the situation that could take shape in the event of war with the Germans—distracted from all of that, there was something that spiritually impeded this war of the Soviet Union with Finland such that I was bursting to go to Khalkhin-Gol at the very height of events that could lead into war with Japan. Strategy is strategy, thinking about state necessities and the future danger of the situation was not alien to me; as I recall, in any case, I strove to understand the correctness of what was happening or, more precisely, its necessity, while nonetheless somewhere in my heart the war with Japan was one thing, and the war with Finland was something quite different.

In January of 1940 the two-month courses at the Frunze Academy for training military correspondents were created. I was not yet quite healthy, but I went to these courses. The war with Finland had by this time proven not to be as many had at first imagined it would, I to the same extent, probably, although by that time I had the plus of the paternal education of the experience of Khalkhin-Gol, and had developed a quite firm resistance to jaunty sentiments and jaunty conversations—they made me sick, I can say without exaggerating. I was still naive in some things, but not, perhaps, in that. The Finnish war dragged on, and it was silently assumed that, having finished the two-month courses in the middle of March, at which we did a great deal of wholehearted training in the fundamentals of tactics and topography and learned how to handle weapons, we would be going to the front as military correspondents. Obviously to replace those who had gone before, including replacing those who had already perished by that time. At Khalkhin-Gol, God spared them all, as they say, but there, at the Finnish front, three writers working as military correspondents perished. I was not drawn to this war, as I have already said, but after Khalkhin-Gol I inwardly felt military or, in any case, connected with the army, and if peace had not been signed the exact day we completed our courses, I would of course have been at that war. But it ended, ended as a result of the satisfaction of namely those state demands that had been made of Finland since the very beginning, and in that sense it

could have been considered successful, but inwardly we felt a sense that the country had been shamed—we didn't speak of it with such directness aloud, but in many conversations this attitude toward what had happened was understood. It proved that there was much we could not do, much we did not know, much that we did very badly. The rumors that the steadfast attention of Stalin was being devoted to the state of affairs in the army, that certain conclusions were being drawn in general from what had happened, reached people like me. And the removal of People's Commissar Voroshilov from his post and the designation of Timoshenko and the very quick rumors of a complete turnaround in army training and the nature of its preparations for war were then confirmation of this.

This was followed by the summer of 1940 and the German seizure of Norway, Denmark, Belgium and Holland, as well as Dunkirk and the rout and capitulation of France—all of these events simply could not be accommodated in the consciousness at once. Although the French and English did not help Poland, although the war in Europe had been called "strange," such a finish to this "strange" war as occurred, I think, was as unexpected for us—and who knows, maybe even more—than there, in the West, where it all happened.

I had no doubt whatsoever of the fact that we would sometime be fighting fascist Germany. Beginning in 1933, with the fire at the Reichstag and the trial of Dimitrov, people of my generation lived with a feeling of inevitability of a clash with fascism. Spain reinforced this feeling even more, while the pact with the Germans did not destroy it. Maybe it did for some—I don't know. For me and my friends in the young literature of the times, it did not. It simply seemed that it would be quite far from us, that beforehand there would be a long war among Germany, France and England, and then sometime later, at the finish, we would clash with fascism. The pact set our reflections in motion this way. There was nothing reassuring in it at first. The Finnish war, with all of the military weaknesses that had been revealed in the army, forced us in hindsight to think of the pact as a greater benefit to us than it seemed to be at first. It is alarming to think of the Finnish war and all that was uncovered in it had we—such as we were in the Finnish war in 1939—not concluded the pact and gone head to head with the Germans.

Naturally, what happened in Finland only sharpened these feelings and sharpened them many times over. The fact that war lay ahead—sooner or later—we had known before. Now we felt that it would not be sooner or later, but right away.

At the courses for military correspondents at the Military Political Academy, which classes began in the fall of 1940 and ended in the middle of June of 1941, when we, returned from the camps, were given our military ranks—I went with the firm confidence that war was very near for us. No reversals in relations with the



Germans could bring peace to my soul—I am speaking for myself and speaking as it was for me. The TASS report of 14 Jun 41 which, as many said later, disarmed some, relaxed the vigilance of some, made, on the contrary, a strange and alarming impression on me—actions with several senses at once, including an exceedingly terrible threat to us. And after the incursion of the Germans into Yugoslavia, I had the feeling that war was moving quite near. I knew no more than others, I had no additional information at my disposal, but I simply felt that things could probably not have been otherwise than what happened in Yugoslavia.

The play "A Fellow from Our Town," although it was about Mongolia and about the defeat of the Japanese, I quite consciously finished with the fact that its heroes were going into battle. I didn't end it with the apotheosis that there actually was at Khalkhin-Gol, but with the moment when the cruelest battles were still underway and much was ahead. I had already talked about this when discussing my play several weeks before the war, had talked about the fact that with all of its shortcomings the play had been written in that way and no other because we were expecting war today or tomorrow. And when the war began, I naturally had that feeling of upheaval on the morning it really began, like everyone, but a feeling of unexpectedness of what had happened was lacking. Yes, it had begun by surprise—how else could it have been started by the Germans, who had operated that way in all other instances before—and they did it that way this time too. Why would they, strictly speaking, start it any other way?

With such thoughts and reflections, which in no way meant that I expected the tragic turn of events in the first days of the war that occurred—I naturally in no way expected that, not differing from the overwhelming majority of other people—I went to the western front two days after the start of the war as a military correspondent for the army newspaper.

Everything that happened next in the war is in my book "Various Days of the War," and what I am going to write on the topic of "Stalin and the War" is none other than essentially additional commentary on this book associated with many additional years of study and thought on this problem.

Now, as I said at the beginning of this part of my manuscript, it remains for me to skip ahead through the whole war directly to 1946.

After the end of the war, I returned to Moscow sometime in June, not right away, around the time of the Victory Parade. I then went twice to Czechoslovakia, and when I returned from the second trip I found out that a decision had been made to send me as part of a group of journalists to Japan to be attached to the headquarters of MacArthur and become acquainted with the situation,

and then report on the trials of the Japanese war criminals being held in Japan. The trip, judging from everything, would be long and I did not want to go very much. The departure time had not been set, and neither had the dates for the trials we were to cover, as far as I could tell then and can tell now. Our group consisted of Agapov, Gorbato, Kudrevatykh and myself, but the orders for the trip did not specify who was to lead our group.

I waited while the premiere of my play "Under the Chestnuts of Prague" was held, and its appearance seemed important at the time—not only personally, but politically—and on which, after returning from the war, I had worked like a farm laborer—both while writing it and during rehearsals. I didn't want to hurry off on a trip to Japan. There was such a weariness after the war that I didn't even want any new impressions, for which I had been very eager at the time.

In general, it came out somehow that since we all came from different papers (I from KRASNAYA ZVEZDA, Gorbato from PRAVDA and Kudrevatykh and Agapov from IZVESTIYA), no one among us was in charge on the trip, the dates were not set, the departure date dragged on and on—first at the request of one, then another. Finally, in November we had pushed things off so long that it reached Stalin. He was in the south on vacation, Molotov had remained behind, and during one of his telephone reports, Stalin suddenly asked, "And the writers, have they left for Japan?" Molotov said he would find out, and having done so, reported that no, the writers had still not left for Japan. "And why not?" asked Stalin. "After all the Politburo, if I am not mistaken, made a decision? Maybe they don't agree with it and intend to appeal to the party congress?"

I thus encountered for the first time the manner of joking that was characteristic of Stalin. His joke was made known to the editors of the three newspapers, and exactly a week later—it was impossible to get the necessary supplies for a six-month trip in any less time, and it was impossible to go there without supplies with the situation in Japan at the time—exactly a week later we were sitting in an official railcar coupled to a train going to Vladivostok.

We also returned home by train from Vladivostok in an official car coupled onto a train, four months later in April of 1946. We had had a stenographer with us on the trip, and my notes on Japan, over half of which were notes of discussions, as it later turned out, comprised twelve hundred typewritten pages. But I myself was only able to read through these several months later, because somewhere around Chita, at one of the stations, a telegram arrived at the car signed by the then head of the head of the Agitation and Propaganda Department [agit-prop] of the Central Committee, Aleksandrov. The telegram reported that I had been included in a delegation of Soviet journalists to an annual conference of American editors and publishers in Washington, which delegation consisted of three people—Erenburg, Galaktionov and

myself—and that I should transfer from the train—I don't remember, in Chita or Irkutsk—to a plane that had been dispatched there for Moscow so as not to be late for the start of the congress. "Confirm receipt," the telegram stated. I confirmed receipt right on a telegram form itself that the person who brought it had brought along and who had apparently been charged in advance with doing everything, and I left, I think, in Chita, hastily saying goodbye to my colleagues and asking the stenographer to decipher my Japanese notes as quickly as possible, and flew to Moscow on a Douglas, or more precisely, an L-2 that we made during the war under license from the Douglas firm. I don't know if it was a regular or a special flight, but by the time I got to the airport, it was already sitting there, and the passengers who were to fly on it were awaiting boarding. The speeds then were not what they are today, and although we flew nonstop, only refueling and changing the crew somewhere, it still took about a day.

I flew into Moscow the next day at four o'clock, and at the editorial office where I went from the airport right upon landing they told me that I should call Lozovskiy, who was then the deputy people's commissar for foreign affairs—that was a slip, because by that time they had already become ministers. From Lozovskiy, to whom I went, I learned that I would be flying out at six in the morning for Berlin, and afterward, after the conversation with him, with Lozovskiy, was over, I was to go to Molotov.

With Lozovskiy the discussion was about Japan, about our impressions and first conclusions, a quite long and detailed discussion, two hours had been set aside for it in advance, because at the end of those two hours Lozovskiy, looking at his watch, said: "It's time now for you to go to Vyacheslav Mikhaylovich, you will find out everything from him that you'll need to know about the upcoming trip."

I was with Molotov for quite a long time, longer than I thought. I was not acquainted with him, if you don't take into account the fact that in the second half of the war I was at receptions two or three times that he had given as the people's commissar of foreign affairs in the private residence of the people's commissar on Granatny Lane, chiefly for our allies, but with the participation of a certain number of representatives of our literature and arts. The acquaintance was limited to handshakes and at most two or three words spoken at the time.

True, I had one mark in my memory connected with the name of Molotov—a mark on an especially personal plane. As the then editor of KRASNAYA ZVEZDA, Ortenberg, related it to me, in 1942 they had intended to send me as a KRASNAYA ZVEZDA correspondent to the United States for several months. To the United States itself or to the operational U.S. troops, since I was a correspondent for KRASNAYA ZVEZDA, I never did find out, it could have been the one or the other or both together. Ortenberg had been told by Molotov over the

phone that they intended to send me. Ortenberg confirmed as editor that he considered my candidacy to be suitable. But a day or two later, Molotov called him again and said that they would evidently not be sending me to America, because there was information that I was a drinker. Ortenberg tried to argue with this, saying that although I was not a teetotaler I did not lose my head when I drank, but Molotov insisted I would not go to America, but either—I don't remember now—to the Karelian or the Bryansk fronts, and upon returning, I found out from Ortenberg that my travels to America would not take place. Ortenberg laughed and said that it was perhaps for the best, the more so not only not to send me, but to send anyone, that there was much more for a KRASNAYA ZVEZDA correspondent to do here than there. I had dual feelings: not such that I was upset, but on the one hand, among other trips to the front, it would have been interesting to travel to the Americans, especially if it would be possible to see how they fight, I had a great deal of youthful curiosity in that; on the other hand, it was aggravating to hear the reason why I couldn't go. In my own feelings, I felt myself a person who was unable to drink away a matter trusted to him—either at home or abroad. And in general, I had a quite indifferent attitude toward all of this—no means no. But I remembered, of course, the reason I didn't go to America. In my later life I encountered various ones, true, not too often, because I traveled a great deal, reasons not to send me somewhere that had initially been planned. Once, in the spring of 1953, in connection with an impending trip to Stockholm, there even appeared the reason of the excessive admiration for Stalin that had appeared in a lead article I had half written for LITERATURNAYA GAZETA. But the reasoning that it was best not to send me somewhere because I was a drinker never came up before or since, and that is probably why I especially remember it.

I had respect for Molotov, I remember his whole personality to this very day, with all of the sharp political non-acceptance of many of his positions. This respect was connected most of all with the fact that Molotov, in our adult memory, from roughly age thirty, was the person who stood closest to Stalin and who most obviously and importantly shared with Stalin his obligations of statehood in our eyes.

Different people appeared at various times as comrades-in-arms of Stalin in our memory—for a while, Voroshilov was such a man, then Kaganovich, then even Yezhov for a while. Molotov remained an unchanging constant through all of this, enjoying—I am afraid to use these big and too significant words, although in this case they are close to the truth—the firmest and most permanent respect and priority in our environment, among my generation. So it was, in any case, up until roughly 1948. To that I would personally add my impression of his flight to the United States in 1942, the stories I wrote down of the pilot and navigator of this quite difficult and dangerous crossing, in which Molotov maintained the invariable tranquillity and courage noted by these people

and valued by them as a virtue in conversations with me. Courage and tranquillity in the face of danger were perhaps the traits that I most admired in people.

In reflecting on Stalin, I naturally return more than once to this figure, but for some reason I want to say here, looking seven years ahead, that Molotov, with whom I first spoke in any detail on 1946, in 1953, when Stalin died, was, I am profoundly convinced, the only one of the members of the Politburo at the time who deeply and truly suffered from the death of Stalin. This rock-solid man was the only one in whose voice the trace of tears could be heard when he spoke over the casket of Stalin, although, it would seem, it was namely he that had more reasons than the rest to experience a feeling of relief, liberation and the possibility of establishing justice with regard to himself, to Molotov, after the death of Stalin. In general, and this has only come to me now—perhaps under the impression of a recent reading of the works of Robespierre—that Molotov was somehow like that figure of the Great French Revolution, just as unselfish, incorruptible, straightforward and tough.

Molotov met me with a dryish courtesy and asked how my flight had been, and he began to talk about the upcoming trip at once. I don't want to err, I don't remember if Molotov uttered the name of Stalin in this conversation, but from what he said and how he said it, even in impersonal form, it was clear that Stalin was aware of this trip. Molotov said that the trip would be of great significance, that every opportunity was being granted to it, that it must be considered essential to utilize these opportunities broadly, that the sense of the trip was not to take part in the congress of editors and publishers, although it was important, but later to be possible to stay in the United States longer, where we, evidently, would be guests of the State Department, and we should use every opportunity therein to explain to all the people we could, and the more the better, that we did not want war, that the widespread rumors of the opposite were absurd and provocative, that the establishment of peace and all that would lead to reinforcing it was an axiom for us that only slanderers could doubt. Repeating that we would evidently be guests of the State Department, Molotov added that although the State Department would probably give the appropriate support to our trip, we should have the possibility of preserving complete independence in all relations, including material ones, for which a decision had been made to provide us not only with travel funds, but each of us three with an adequate sum so that for three months—and it was not desirable to shorten the trip compared to that plan—we would have enough funds for all expenses, including hotels, transportation, reciprocal private receptions and payments for our own translators that we needed or aside from those provided by the State Department, or afterward, when we ceased to be guests of the State Department and remained for a time in the United States on our own initiative as private individuals, and would bear all expenses. The sum cited by Molotov, without commenting on it, struck me at first by its size—it testified to

the fact that the complete independence of our position and the absence of any difficulties on material issues had been given truly great significance in this instance.

In the course of the conversation, I—I don't know which expression is better to use—understood or felt that the overall disposition of the trip, the breadth of the issues, evidently came from Stalin. Molotov was speaking here not just for himself, but fulfilling a corresponding charge. That is what I was thinking then and I had reason to be convinced of it later, when I heard from the lips of Stalin how he simultaneously had such a rigid and a painful attitude toward everything that would fall under the overall concept of "groveling to foreigners." After winning the war, in a victorious country racked with hunger, that was his sore spot.

### March 3, 1979

Having told me that Erenburg and Galaktionov were already in Paris and would leave the day after the next for New York, Molotov added that I should, upon catching up to them, fly along with them at once. This was not indicated in the decision, said Molotov, but for my own information, I was the leader of the delegation. Questions could arise there, in the United States, serious questions that they could not resolve for themselves. In those cases, we were to appeal to them directly for solutions to these questions through the embassy or the general consulate.

I thought this was the end of the conversation, but I did not hurry to get up from the table, because since the moment that Lozovski had said that I should be brought to Molotov, I had an idea—were I in Moscow ahead of my colleagues and were I to speak with Molotov, I would ask him directly about a particularly acute and painful question that Gen Derevyanko, our representative to the Control Council in Japan, had asked us to relate in Moscow to whomever we could. But it turned out that Molotov did not intend to dismiss me and began asking me about Japan. The questions, to put it coarsely, were chiefly connected with one problem: the extent of genuine and illusory democratization and demilitarization of Japan, what predominates in the policies being pursued in Japan by MacArthur's staff and the Americans in general. What were our impressions of how it was going? I told him what we had talked about a great deal among ourselves, about that fact that, in general terms, a dual impression had taken shape among us.

Molotov listened to me attentively and cordially. All was fine until I started to say that I had an errand—to ask Moscow about something.

"Whose? What errand?" asked Molotov quickly, and something in his face changed for a instant.



I said it was an errand for Gen Derevyanko and that the question being discussed was a change in the nature, time periods and norms for supplying that small contingent, the battalion of troops, that was at the disposal of our member of the Control Council—it required urgent resolution, since the practices that were in existence were in no way suitable—I don't want to go into the details here that I related to Molotov then, but I spoke of this with passion, perhaps, it seemed, too much. In short, I put something personal into this conversation.

"That is not his affair—to put such questions through third parties and be engaged with private intermediaries," said Molotov sternly about Derevyanko with anger. I suddenly felt some insurmountable line between the person who had just five minutes ago had been sitting in front of me and this one—harsh and ready for the immediate punishment of those guilty of something, not completely understandable to me, but evidently absolutely and steadfastly unacceptable to him. The conversation was cut short on this hard note; Molotov rose, wished me the successful fulfillment of my assignment and said goodbye.

Eight hours later I was already on a plane headed for Berlin.

I will omit a description of our trip to the United States. What I am writing too often is transformed into autobiography, although to some extent it is, obviously, inevitable. I will try, as in other such cases, as well as in connection with the trip to the United States, to Canada, and then to France—all merged into a single trip—to touch on those elements that are in my mind associated one way or another with the chief topic of this manuscript, devoted to the role and place of Stalin in our lives, and first and foremost the life of my generation—both during his life and after his death. Perhaps then I will find more precise phrasing, but for now I will stay with this one.

During the trip and the meetings, dinners and conferences of various societies that followed each other endlessly, quite different sorts of questions were posed to us at press conferences. Not very often openly nasty, sometimes difficult for us, ironical, amusing—including some whose sense was not really to find anything out, but to see how we would extricate ourselves from the difficult situation into which it was considered, and sometimes was true, that they had put us in.

This began with the fact that, meeting our appearance with applause at the session of editors and publishers in Washington that had already begun, in literally just a few minutes permission was sought to pose questions of the Russian colleagues of great interest to the audience. The first of the questions was "Tell us, is it possible that you in the Soviet Union, after the next elections, could replace Mr. Stalin as the head of the government by someone else, for instance, Mr. Molotov?" I would have been at a loss for what to say, the more so at that

moment. But not Erenburg. He nodded barely noticeably to me that he would answer and said, "It is obvious that you and we have different political views of family life: you, as is typical of light-hearted youth, elect a new bride every four years, while we, as people who are along in years, are married seriously and for the long run." The answer evoked laughter and applause, the Americans value quick-wittedness, and they were interested, strictly speaking, not in what Erenburg's answer was but in how he extricated himself. He did this with brilliance. I don't remember the other questions, there was evidently nothing of difficulty for us in them.

When I was out west in America alone, without Erenburg, I was somehow asked at a press conference if I had read Trotsky's book in which he set forth a biography of Stalin. I answered that I had not. Then they asked, would I like to read it, this book? I said no, I had no such desire, because books of that sort did not interest me. They then asked me what was meant by "books of that sort." I answered that it was those non-sporting books in which in which a person who has been knocked out and lost a championship match begins to describe in detail precisely how he lost and complains about what happened to him. The answer satisfied the audience. Perhaps the issue was not just the certain degree of resourcefulness that I displayed in this instance, but something else more material to Americans in 1946.

Stalin was quite a remote figure for them, quite mysterious, in many ways unacceptable, but at the same time, for many of them—I am talking about those Americans who in general had an interest to some extent in problems associated with us—Stalin was the man who in the 1920s had delivered a knockout to such a far better known political leader of the times in America as Trotsky, and in the recent past had knocked out Hitler. Naturally, with their assistance, the Americans, with Lend-Lease, their arms deliveries, their bombings of Germany and their invasion of Europe, but nonetheless it was Stalin who had knocked out Hitler, conclusively and irrevocably overrunning him in Berlin, in the bunker of the imperial chancellory, where Hitler committed suicide.

The Americans were sporting with us in posing such questions. Sporting, having in mind us, people who were associated with other forms of political behavior than they themselves and cannot permit themselves any liberties in conversations about their own political order and their own political leaders. All of these digs related to us and the political order that had been established by Stalin in our mother country as personified by the three of us. As for the primary causes, then it was Stalin himself, or Uncle Joe, as he was sometimes called—if they sometimes joked about him in our presence, then, as far as I can remember, they never crossed the bounds where a joke could be considered a national insult inflicted on us by expressions unacceptable to us as addressed to the head of our state. They joked a little about something, more rarely ironically—the very words

"Uncle Joe" were not so much familiarity as they were testimony to the popularity of Stalin—while in general they had a very serious attitude toward him, with a share of gratitude for the recent military past and a share of wariness for the future, who knows what he might want and what he would go for in the future. The fact that of the "big three" that had taken shape in the minds of not just the Americans alone, Roosevelt had died, Churchill was no longer in power and only Stalin was still in his post also played some role in all this.

I think that then, by the summer of 1946, notwithstanding the Fulton speech of Churchill, notwithstanding the cold war that began with that speech, the popularity of Stalin himself was at a maximum—not only at home, but around the world, compared to any other moment in history throughout the decades that his name passed. The years 1944, 1945, 1946—and even, perhaps, counting from 1943, with the capture of Paulus and the Stalingrad catastrophe of the German Army—were the peak of Stalin's popularity, which had, of course, different natures and different nuances, but was a political and public reality that could not fail to be taken into account by anyone anywhere.

In printing my verse after the 20th Congress and later, meeting with many military people and working on the novel "The Living and the Dead," I defined for myself something most important in my understanding of Stalin and my attitude toward him, and I no longer included in books those poems which discussed Stalin or mentioned his name. I liked my poem "Speech of My Friend Samed Vurgun at Dinner in London" very much. In my opinion, it was one of the best poems I wrote over my whole life, but knowing everything about Stalin that I found out after 1956, I cannot read the end of that poem aloud, where Stalin rises up as the symbol and model of internationalism. This ending contradicted the conceptions of Stalin that had taken shape within me by that time, and to correct the poem, or more correctly to chop off its ending, seemed immoral, and it was not printed any more.

At the beginning of November in 1941 on Rybachye Peninsula, I, still not knowing of the impending parade on Red Square, wrote the poem "Harsh Anniversary," which began with the words: "Comrade Stalin, do you hear us? You should hear us, this we know." This poem was dedicated in its entirety to our attitude toward Stalin then and our hopes connected with him. The poem was written quite far from Moscow, I had no complete depiction of what was happening there, around Moscow—the poem expressed alarm and a heightening of all the senses. I am not ashamed of this poem today. I do not repent that I wrote it then, because it absolutely genuinely expressed my feeling at the time, but I don't print it anymore, because the feeling toward Stalin that was in those verses has died in me once and for all. The significance that Stalin had for us at the moment when this verse was written does not seem exaggerated to me, it is historically true. But I cannot read this poem with

the same feeling I had when I wrote it, because I have long since had a different attitude toward Stalin. I see the great and the terrible that was in him, I understand in my own way that which he committed—that which was essential, that which was terrible—but nothing like a feeling of love for him has been preserved in me. That is the sort of impulses I had, the same as other people, and they were so genuine that they could be condemned, but one should not repent them.

The name of Stalin is mentioned in two or three other poems written in different years, but I did not print these, like dozens of other of my old verses, because they were not worth reprinting. I have no regret for them, as opposed to the poem about Samed Vurgun.

But one poem that contains the name of Stalin I printed and continue to print precisely in the form in which it was written. Everything in it is preserved as it sounded when I wrote it and when what it describes took place. I am talking about the poem "Meeting in Canada" with which I opened my 1948 book "Friends and Enemies." I recall that the discussion concerned a hall in which the first rows contained people who had come to disrupt the meeting:

Feeling almost scalded,  
Stepping forward, I begin the speech.  
Its beginning—like a jump  
To the attack, so as not to fall.  
"Russia, Stalin, Stalingrad!"  
The first three rows are silent.  
But somewhere behind a light noise,  
And before it could come to mind,  
Through the silent rows  
Suddenly, like an avalanche, like a wave  
Like a mountain that moved,  
Comes an answering "Hurrah!"

I wrote this poem about what really was, and how it was. I can read those verses today, and I have read them more than once, because the genuine part of history that is expressed in them, all of the significance that the word "Stalin" had for me along with the words "Stalingrad" and "Russia" even today remain a part of my feelings on the war. Today I have a different understanding than I did of the whole course of the war, its surprise measures and the scope of its failures, the scale of responsibility of Stalin for these failures and so forth and the like, that had to be and probably still have to be disputed long and hard with some historians who are trying to gloss over these problems in the Great Patriotic War. When I recall the war and my own feelings therein, I remember these lines of mine, thrown down as a challenge to enemies and extended as a hand to friends there, in America, in 1946: "Russia, Stalin, Stalingrad!" And when I pronounce them thoughtfully and when I pronounce them aloud, I have no tickle in my throat or my soul. Maybe someone won't like that now, but it is as I say.

By the way, if I were to bring up here that people that do not read Soviet literature, including articles and sketches written during Stalin's lifetime, are sometimes inclined to feel that those were straight quotations from Stalin, panegyrics in his honor—that is both apropos and not apropos. But I want to note that, first, literature was large and diverse, people wrote in different ways, some mentioned him inopportunely, others in vain, some more often, some less so, and not out of some fundamentally different attitudes toward that figure, but simply by virtue of their own tact, their own decency, their own conceptions of what was proper and what was excessive, of honor and flattery. As for me, I have already spoken of my poetry. In rereading my military correspondence, I even discovered with some surprise—it seemed to be in hindsight that I mentioned the name of Stalin more often—that over the whole war, in all of the sketches and correspondence in my name, there are only three or four times, and each time in a suitable place, when I proceeded from our prevailing views of Stalin. And in vain—not sinful, I did not understand, and in a number of my articles on political and literary topics I quoted him only when it seemed essential, and not according to considerations—whatever the outcome, like this—one, the second, third, fourth article, and all without quotes from Stalin. I remember neither having to be tormented with how to stick a quote in for no reason at all nor encountering such demands from editors. And I have no feeling of peculiarity herein, this was not done in literature in general.

March 4, 1979

After the United States, Canada and the United States again, I spent about a month in France before my return home, so my whole trip, beginning in Japan, lasted nine months.

During my time in Paris, and then in the south of France, I met quite a few people from the first postwar emigration. True, I would never meet the most frenzied representatives of the emigration, there were no causes for these meetings, no reasons—not on my part nor on theirs. At the time, in 1946, the now fascist emigrants who had supported the Germans during the occupation of France tried to get as far away as possible, crawl into corners and hoped to be neither seen nor heard—the times did not favor any publicity whatsoever on their part. But the rest of the Russian emigration, which for the most part had anti-German positions, and if not pro-Soviet, were at least pro-Russian—I was able to see this quite broadly. Our victory over fascism produced the strongest impression in this environment, and this impression continued to be preserved—many emigrants had taken part in the Resistance, many wanted to go home, to the motherland. In meeting these people, generally on the right wing of this emigration, that did not understand us, that were not reconciled to our order and to our way of life and did not want Soviet citizenship

and rejected the possibility of it—I could have been convinced at that moment, perhaps, that respect for what our country had done in the war years was an almost universal feeling.

In my time I have written in quite detailed fashion about the most interesting of these meetings—meetings with Bunin, Teffi and Adamovich. And now, recalling these meetings again in connection with this topic I am writing about, sorting through those conversations in my mind, I cannot remember anything that was not only disrespectful, but even ambiguous, that was stated at the time by such people as Bunin in regard to Stalin. Bunin, if one tries to formulate briefly my feeling of his positions then, undoubtedly had scores to settle with the Soviet authorities, with the Soviet order, with Soviet literature, scores from the past, scores which he later asserted, in his books that came out at the end of his life, were evil and irreconcilable, but at the same time, in 1946 Stalin was a national hero of Russia for him after the victory over the Germans, having defended it from them in all of its unity and indivisibility. I admit that after this deed of national heroism committed by Stalin, Bunin looked to the future with a temporizing attitude: would any reforms occur there, in Russia, under what was for Bunin the undoubted one-man rule of Stalin, reforms that would bring the past closer to the present?—we can only wait and see! For a person who had lived over a quarter century in France, as Bunin had, reflections on the topic of such a historical example as Napoleon were in no way alien.

I was mentioning the impressions connected with my visit to France because they also indirectly signified something in my perception of the personality of Stalin by the time I returned home. In my opinion, I do not err, but almost immediately after my arrival home from France, I went to Smolenshchina, the elective district from which I was elected in absentia—being at the time in Japan—a deputy to the USSR Supreme Soviet. Why namely from Smolenshchina I do not know, perhaps due to the poem "You remember, Alesha, the roads of Smolenshchina..." But then I found out something else, that this district was one of the toughest, where the war had landed once and for all. They were Yartsevo, Dorogobuzh, Dukhovshchina, Izdeshkovo, Safonovo—places familiar to me, especially from the beginning of the war, covered with trenches, smashed from bombs and shells—in general, I went there, to my electoral district, with suppressed alarm: what would I see? I really did see much that was severe, bitter, almost unbearable in contrast to all that I had seen in the warring but undestroyed and very rich America.

This contrast that had settled in my heart and a passionate desire to juxtapose the spiritual forces of our society, the spiritual beauty of its people and their spiritual firmness with the might and wealth of the United States forced me then, during my trip, to think about how to write about it, seeking the first access to my future work, the main one for me as a writer after the end of the war—



the novel "Smoke of the Fatherland." This occupied my thoughts most of all and, perhaps, I thus did not even remember the details of my first inner reaction to the report of Zhdanov on the journals ZVEZDA and LENINGRAD and all that took place in connection with that and around it.

As for the contrast between the standard of living here and in Europe, a contrast encountered by millions of warring people, it was a moral and psychological blow that was not easy for our people to bear, despite the fact that they were the winners of that war—I felt that and understood it. Even before my trip to America I could not in good conscience number myself among those people who underestimated this psychological danger and the degree of this moral suffering. Right after the war, in the summer of 1945, I tried to control this psychological difficulty, common to many of us, and sought a way out of it as best I could. "Yes, our women sometimes wear God knows what," said one of the heroines of the play "Under the Chestnuts of Prague," Petrov, on the last day of the war. "They are wearing darned and re-darned stockings. Countrywoman, do not frown, it is right. Things still will not be the way we would want for many years. You see, Mrs. Bozhena, they speak much of the war's deprivations in Europe. And after all, they don't always know what deprivation is. True deprivation. We, who have saved Europe, have nothing in the world to be ashamed of, be it the darned stockings of our women, that they were sometimes hungry in the rear during this war, that whole families lived in closets. Yes, it was so. But our army was armed, clothed, satisfied. Yes, we are not yet so rich as to be rich in everything. Yes, we did not build private residences, we built factories. And the Germans passed through the streets of Paris, but not the streets of Moscow!" "You should not love Europe," said the Czech woman named Bozhena in reply to Petrov. "These private residences, these villas, these houses with iron roofs must irritate you. You don't deny it, do you?" "Ideas can be denied, but iron roofs cannot. If it is iron, it is iron," Petrov answered her.

In my conception, such an item as iron roofs would not have been able to be denied or silenced in a country where several million people had already told or would tell many millions of other people what they, the victors, had seen in Europe. It seemed to me that the way out of this psychologically difficult state for the victors was a candid acknowledgment of our comparative poverty and, at the same time, a proud awareness of the correctness of the path we took of many years of belt tightening, a path without which, I was certain, we would not have reached victory, we would not have lasted.

And of course, I had in mind that we would have to work straight through for many years. "No, our generation was not born to rest..." said the same Petrov in the same play "Under the Chestnuts of Prague." Anticipating this reflection with the assertion that they would have to work in a less than idyllic situation even after the war.

"Mr. Churchill—I heard it on the radio yesterday—gave a speech and set forth his ideals. In his opinion, there should be no socialism on the earth. Because it is depravity and disorder. And in my opinion, there should be socialism on earth, because it is joy and happiness. You see, the war has ended, and people have different views of the future. Very different." That is how awkwardly, it seems to me now, but quite clearly Colonel Petrov from "Under the Chestnuts of Prague" formulated my own postwar views at the time.

With those views I went to Japan, and whence to America, Canada and France. These views were not subject to any fundamental changes in America or during my trip to the utterly destroyed Smolenshchina, and only the force of the contrast increased almost geometrically. The feeling that we really had not been born to rest was also strengthened, and even became somewhat frenzied. And the feeling of psychological danger in comparing the truly incomparable standards of living at the time over the first year after the war, spent almost entirely abroad, of course, did not weaken, but grew stronger—but all the same I remained convinced that that there was no need to hide the truth on this score, and efforts to hide it would be both useless and degrading. With these feeling and intentions, to which I had devoted no small passion in working on the future novel, I returned to Moscow from my trip to Smolenshchina and the voters. And I buried myself at once in literary life, in which passions were raging, evoked by the report of Zhdanov and the Central Committee decree on the journals ZVEZDA and LENINGRAD.

I recently reread my thoughts and considerations that were written in 1956 and sent to the Central Committee connected with these decrees, and I don't want to go back now to these quite logically expounded critical observations, the correctness of which I have no doubt today as well. If we are speaking of my feelings in 1946, in trying to recall them more precisely and reliably, the chief feeling was that something really had to be done, but not what was done at all. It was essential to say something, but not what was said at all. Not that way, and in the majority of the cases not that at all.

As I remember, at the end of the war, right after it and in 1946, there was a quite wide circle of intelligentsia, in any case, artistic intelligentsia, that I knew quite well, and it seemed that something must happen to move us in the direction of liberalization, perhaps—I don't know how to express this in the words of that time rather than this one—an indulgence, greater simplicity and ease of intercourse with the intelligentsia of at least those countries with whom we had made war against a common adversary. It seemed to some that exchange with foreign correspondents, quite widespread during the war years, would not be reprehensible after the war as well, that there would be many trips back and forth, that there would be many pictures of America—and not the booty that had been brought back from Germany, but new ones—in general, there existed an atmosphere of a

certain ideological optimism that somehow did not correspond at all with the grave material situation that the country was in, especially in 1946, after the lack of a harvest.

There was a certain light-headedness and aspirations of emphasizing the reverence for what had earlier been underestimated from an official point of view. I think, by the way, that the choice of Akhmatova and Zoshchenko as targets was connected not so much with them themselves as it was with the dizzying and somewhat demonstrative triumph in the climate of which the speeches of Akhmatova in Moscow took place, the evenings she took part in, the meetings with her, and with the emphatically prestigious position that Zoshchenko occupied after his return from Leningrad. There was a certain demonstrativeness in all of this, a certain Fronde, perhaps, based on an incorrect evaluation of the climate and confidence in the silently assumed expansion of the possible and narrowing of the prohibited after the war. Evidently Stalin, having sufficient information, moreover sent to him from various directions and covering and verifying itself, felt something in the air that required, in his opinion, an immediate tightening of the screws and cutoff of unsubstantiated hopes for the future.

Both before and then, Stalin had had an attitude of suspicion toward Leningrad that was preserved from the 1920s and, evidently, the supposed presence there of some attempts to create a spiritual autonomy. The goal was clear, the fulfillment was swift and mercilessly careless in the choice of targets and the nature of the accusations. In general, if I try to formulate my feelings then toward the decrees (I am always trying and cannot completely separate then from now), I was especially troubled, of course, by the decree on the journals ZVEZDA and LENINGRAD, and about Akhmatova I thought, for example, like this at the time: why are we posing the question of the return of Bunin or Teffi—that is the postulation of the question I encountered in France—if we deal—with whom?—with Akhmatova, who had not emigrated, who had spoken out thus during the war, in this manner in Zhdanov's report? It was a feeling of coarseness, unjustified, heavy—although I did not have the reverence for Zoshchenko during the war years that I did for Akhmatova, but what they were saying and writing about him was also unpleasant and discomfiting.

At the same time, in the decree on the Leningrad journals or, more precisely, behind them, I think, there was no call to gloss things over, to lighten the depiction of life, for Stalin subjectively, although many took it just that way. Almost simultaneously, during that same period, Stalin supported, or strictly speaking, advanced fundamentally such far from light depictions of life as "Fellow Travelers" by Panova or, a little later, "In the Trenches of Stalingrad" by Nekrasov. The tragic "The Star" by Kazakevich received a prize soon afterward, as did the "Kruzhilika," full of conflicts. No, all of this was not so simple and not so unambiguous. It seems that

the execution, hasty and, I would say, somewhat spiteful, largely differed from the design, which was basically purely political, the aim being pursued was just to hold the intelligentsia, which had gotten a little out of hand, more tightly, to cut off their illusions, to show them their place in society and to remind them that the tasks they faced had been formulated just as clearly and definitely as they were formulated earlier, before the war, during the time when not only some generals had gotten on their high horse, but some members of the intelligentsia as well—in short, something along the lines of the cobbler and his last.

Before the war and for the first three years of the war, I was a member of the Writers' Union and one of the relatively better known poets of the younger generation, beginning to enjoy fame as a dramatist and the author of one of the first at all major prose works written about the war during the war. In 1939, among another, I think, hundred and seventy or so writers, I was awarded the Badge of Honor and, as they said then, became a decorated writer. This was the first widespread decoration of writers, and it held some significance for those decorated. I was decorated along with Dolmatovskiy and Aliger, although in our circle and our generation, in the narrow sense of the word, there were other people no less able than the three of us. But they singled us out. This was evidently determined by the literary tastes and sympathies of Aleksandr Aleksandrovich Fadeyev, who, if we are speaking on the scale of the Writers' Union, it seems to me, had prepared this list of decorations quite by himself. My play "A Fellow from Our Town" had come out before the war and had been produced very widely in the war years, and this made my name much better known than it had been before from poetry. Then there was the military correspondent's work for KRASNAYA ZVEZDA, which attracted quite a bit of attention. Then "Russian People" appeared, printed over the course of several days in the pages of PRAVDA. And not long before that, some lyrical verse printed in journals and some poems—"Wait for Me," "You remember, Alesha, the streets of Smolenskchina..." and "Kill Him," printed in newspapers and confirming my fame as a poet. "Days and Nights" was published in the journal ZNAMYA, and also appeared in parts with continuations in KRASNAYA ZVEZDA, adding to my certain share of literary popularity.

In 1942 I was awarded the Stalin Prize for the play "A Fellow from Our Town," and in 1943 for the play "Russian People." In 1946, when I was in Japan, I also received one quite unexpectedly for the novel "Days and Nights," which no one had submitted for a prize—more than two years after its appearance—and which had occurred at the initiative of Stalin.

Why am I mentioning all of this? In order to explain that by the end of the summer of 1946, when the changes in the leadership of the Writers' Union were pre-ordained and the changes in the structure of the leadership had already been proposed after the Central Committee

decrees, I, although I was young and proved to be—I think it is not an exaggeration to say this—the best known writer of my generation, I had practically no relation to the activity of the Writers' Union and remained in that sense a completely green and inexperienced person. In 1944 several front-line writers—Tvardovskiy, Kozhevnikov, Gorbato, and some others, it seems—were introduced, or rather co-opted, into the presidium of the Writers' Union. I had conversations on these topics at the time with Dmitriy Alekseyevich Polikarpov, who was working with Tikhonov, the chairman of the union, in the capacity of executive secretary. It seems that once or maybe twice—between trips to the front—I was present at some sessions of the presidium that I have forgotten. That's it. For the rest the collective I worked in was KRASNAYA ZVEZDA until the end of the war, although the feeling of a popular writer came to me, a name that practically everyone knew one way or another. But this feeling was combined with the feeling of a journalist that remained, a newspaperman, and moreover a newspaperman—namely a correspondent, a person not making a newspaper—I plainly knew nothing of that then—producing material for that newspaper, a traveling correspondent. It was with that dual feeling that I went to Japan and to America. And when Zhdanov assembled all of us, the members of the Presidium of the Writers' Union, to discuss the issue of how the union would operate in the future at the end of August or September of 1946, after my return to Moscow, I was, I repeat, quite green in this regard.

The first of the two discussions was long and lasted several hours. Various people named various candidates to the secretariat, which, it was supposed, would in practice guide the work of the union. And when Boris Gorbato suddenly proposed me as one of the possible candidates for leadership of the union, praising me in unrestrained phrases as an organizer and the head of our writers' team in Japan, everyone just smiled at this suggestion as exceedingly amicable in relation to me, but at the same time not serious. And I, when the session ended and we had headed home, roundly cursed Boris, who had, it seems, felt a little embarrassed by the general reaction to his suggestion, but by his habit he querulously returned the abuse, saying that he had been the secretary of either the MAPP [Moscow Association of Proletarian Writers] or the VAPP [All-Union Association of Proletarian Writers] at nineteen or twenty, not thirty, and had done this work just as badly as all the rest, no worse at all.

Two or three days later we assembled again in the same place, at Zhdanov's, and Zhdanov said that the prior discussion of the affairs of the Writers' Union that had taken place there had been related to Comrade Stalin and that a decision had been made to entrust the party group of the board of the Writers' Union with recommending the organization of the secretariat of the Writers' Union in the following composition: general secretary of the board of the Writers' Union—Fadeyev,

deputy general secretaries—Simonov, Vishnevskiy, Tikhonov, and secretaries Leonov and Gorbato, wherein Gorbato would be confirmed as the secretary of the party group of the board.

The fact that Fadeyev was becoming head of the union was not unexpected. At the prior session he had refused quite definitively, saying that having only just finished "Young Guard," after many years he felt a taste for real writer's work and, half joking and half serious, asked us not to ruin him. In general, there was truly, with the imperious nature of Fadeyev and with his political grasp, not a shred of doubt that nonetheless that they would probably put him somewhere. As a writer, he did not want to head the union, this was true, but as a literary and political figure he truly did not see who could do it besides him. This was also true—and not only subjectively, but objectively as well up for that time. So Fadeyev as the head of the union was not unexpected for any of us, the phrase "general secretary" itself could undoubtedly come into the head of no one but Stalin. He was the author of the phrase. Obviously he also, for some considerations of his own, placed the three deputy general secretaries not in alphabetical order but in order of stature. Tikhonov was made the third of the deputies, this emphasized his own attitude of respect toward him, emphasized that the criticism of the union in the decrees on the journals ZVEZDA and LENINGRAD, the change in structure and the elimination of the post of chairman of the union—all of this was one thing, and the name of Tikhonov and the significance of the figure of him in the new and newly arranged leadership of the union was something else. That is how we understood it then, in any case, that it had clearly come from Stalin, because the conversations at the prior session had not assumed any idea that Tikhonov would prove to be one of the leaders of the newly formed secretariat of the union. It was obvious that the designation of Gorbato as party organizer for the board also had come from Stalin—I assume that he didn't want Fadeyev, with his reputation and his position as a member of the Central Committee and his imperious nature in the capacity of general secretary, to have all of the power categorically. Evidently it was his idea that Gorbato as secretary of the party group would be assumed to have some power of criticism. This was Stalin's initiative, because it usually happened that the leader of an organization, if he was a communist, convened the party group of that organization when necessary.

I would add that the recommendation to choose as secretaries writers from the union republics—one republic of Central Asia and one each from the Ukraine, Belorussia and each of the Caucasian and Baltic republics—was also Stalin's. In general, everything was decided for us, and we were placed in our posts by Stalin, and placed, so far as I can judge from the first years of operation of the union, quite sensibly. Thus, a week earlier thinking nothing of the sort, I was one of the leaders of the Writers' Union, and this defined the nature of my life and some specific features of my work as a man of letters for many years to come.



A week or a week and a half afterward, when I and my colleagues set to work at the union, I was named editor of NOVYY MIR. In contrast to what happened at the union, this was not completely unexpected for me: discussions had been held with me at some time about becoming editor of the journal, I had even set forth some considerations to the Central Committee about how I imagined the journal to be. I had some experience therein, albeit small and one-sided: in the second half of the war I had become a member of the editorial board of the journal ZNAMYA, not working regularly with the editors, of course, but in 1944 and 1945 someone had been reading when it happened and made their inferences, chiefly and almost exclusively on the poetry. I wanted to run the journal in the face of all my inexperience, I did not have a very clear concept of how it was done, but I felt some sort of power in myself to do it.

Thus, over the course of a single month I had become both first deputy to Fadeyev in the union and editor of the oldest of the Moscow post-revolutionary "fat" journals. KRASNAYA NOV, which had been created before NOVYY MIR, had ended its existence as early as 1943, during the war.

I set about my work at the journal with enthusiasm. My comrade Krivitskiy from KRASNAYA ZVEZDA agreed to come and be my deputy, a man with experience, sparkling journalistic abilities and a difficult-to-take but firm nature. Sholokhov and Fedin remained from the old editors, of whom the former could be counted on just as he was before, taking no part whatsoever in the work of the journal, while the latter, on the contrary, took part in the work—I won't go into this, as I have already written about it in my recollections of Fedin. Such splendid people as Valentin Katayev and the genius and trove of knowledge Boris Nikolayevich Agapov, with whom I fell in love during our trip to Japan and with whom I later, after he had come to NOVYY MIR, worked twelve years side by side on both NOVYY MIR and LITERATURNAYA GAZETA, and then back to NOVYY MIR, did not refuse to join the editorial board of the journal. The youngest member of the board, the same age as the thirty-year-old editor, was Aleksandr Mikhaylovich Borechagovskiy, who came to Moscow for it, a talented Kiev theatrical, and not just theatrical, critic, and upon whose shoulders fell the obligation of organizing a permanent department for fraternal literatures at the journal.

I mention this because all of this will to a certain extent have a relation to the future, since, in addressing the main theme of my narrative, I cannot bypass some details of my own work in various years at NOVYY MIR and at LITERATURNAYA GAZETA.

The decree of the Central Committee and the report of Zhdanov on the journals ZVEZDA and LENINGRAD had been published in the ninth issue of NOVYY MIR and signed by the previous members of the editorial board. Naturally, I did not have in mind that the new

editorial board headed by a new editor would not have reprinted the decree and the report in the pages of NOVYY MIR—of course we would have if it had not been done earlier. But it turned out that the ninth issue, in which the Central Committee decree and Zhdanov's report had been published, was the finale of the work of the last editorial board, they had finished something, and we began as if with a clean sheet. Flipping through the double—tenth and eleventh—issue of NOVYY MIR for 1946 with which we began our work, I think that in the very brief time period we had, it wasn't done that badly and was even broad. It opened—if it had ever been done before, it had in any case been a long time since it had been in the "fat" journals—not with a novel or with poetry, but with the sketch "In the Donbass" by Boris Galin. It had poetry by Narovchatov, Smelyakov, Lukonin, prose by Paustovskiy, a letter to the editors by Erenburg on attention to the memory of those who had fallen in war, the screenplay "Life in Bloom" by Dovzhenko, on which he later based his "Michurina," and a short story by Andrey Platonov called "The Ivanov Family" ("The Return"). The publication of these two items was connected with a certain risk at the time—after the brutal criticism of Dovzhenko in 1944 for his screenplay about the Ukraine, this was the first publication of a new item of his, and as always in such cases, there was no shortage of people willing to read this through a magnifying glass. As for Platonov's short story "The Ivanov Family," Krivitskiy and I really liked it. We wanted to print Platonov, our comrade from KRASNAYA ZVEZDA, in our first issue...

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I especially wanted, having received this opportunity, to continue this story of the return from the war with what was written by Platonov during the war years in KRASNAYA ZVEZDA and which somehow helped him find anew a more or less normal position in literature after the destructive criticism of the 1930s. Krivitskiy and I did not foresee any misfortune. Only Agapov did. Joining us in our good opinion on the story and even adding that the story was not only good, but excellent, the wise Agapov added: "In any event, we will consider that I voted the same as you, but I warn you that we are going to have trouble with this story. My old man's memory hints it to me." Agapov, who was 47 at the time, liked to consider himself somewhat coquettishly as mighty figure seemingly eternally indestructible and to speak of an old man's memories, habits and weaknesses. "In its time, if this old man's memory does not betray me, KRASNAYA NOV was almost closed for Platonov's things that were published in it, there was an unbelievable scandal in which Yermilov, and even Fadeyev, it seems, were called in and got a dressing down at the highest level."

From Agapov's intonation and facial expression, there could be no doubt that it was namely Stalin who had given Fadeyev the dressing down over Platonov.

"In the story," continued Agapov, "there are some nuances of that particular attitude toward life and people's acts characteristic of Platonov that was especially disapproved of in the past, we were even warned about it, although the story, I repeat, is excellent, and if there is trouble, then we will consider that I did not warn you about it."

I don't know why, but Krivitskiy and I had a very light attitude toward this warning. Inwardly the story was a continuation of what had been printed many times in KRASNAYA ZVEZDA, the same Platonov who had not elicited any reproaches—we were sure that it would be so this time as well. We had another consideration as well: it was unpleasant somehow that having just been named the new editor and approved my editorial collegium, to begin to thrash them for something for the first issue they put out. The first sins were usually forgiven for a start in such cases.

Alas, however, Agapov proved right. The issue had hardly come out when Yermilov squeezed into LITERATURNAYA GAZETA the rumbling article "The Slandereous Story of A. Platonov." Platonov's story was a total of fourteen journal pages, and Yermilov's article was practically the entire length of the story, a whole newspaper type page. Leningrad was, according to the distribution of responsibilities at the Writers' Union, under the direct observance of Fadeyev, and Yermilov was his long-time comrade-in-arms from way back, at the time, in 1946, his friend, in other cases—I use the word without repentance—his assistant, and this article could only have appeared as the result of their collective opinions and decision. The article was merciless, it struck a blow to a defenseless person barely on his own two feet. This episode was for me the first chop at my relations with Fadeyev, a chop that I never forgot. I held him highly, I knew his worth, not unreservedly, and I liked him, but I could not forgive him for some instances. They remained in my heart like notches, while he was alive, and they remained after he resolved to depart this life.

Why did he do it? Why? It disturbed me. I had already firmly disliked and not respected Yermilov before this. I did not speak with Fadeyev about this topic because, notwithstanding all my inexperience, I felt that there would be no discussion or it would be insincere. What was going on? What did he behave that way? It seemed to me that as an experienced politician, he should not have feared that something extra, especially on Platonov, would follow the decrees that had already appeared. That was not Stalin's style, not like him. Either Fadeyev nonetheless so remembered the risky situation that he had gotten into due to Platonov that he did not want any part of the risk, even the smallest, because it would not be him, if anything were to happen, that would get it first off; or, as was his attitude toward some people that he had encountered in his early years with whom he had differed whom he then did not like or did not trust, did he remember Platonov as a person who had personally

caused him, Fadeyev, evil? As a person for whom nothing should be forgiven again, nothing ever? I knew several people in literature toward whom he had this attitude—without mercy, without forgiveness for their sins. I don't know, maybe I am mistaken, but my conception of the matter was thus.

And perhaps, having just returned to the union at the initiative of Stalin, he wanted to show himself in those first months to be equal to the task, to be cloaked in the armor of staunchness, infallibility and retentiveness—political retentiveness—and Platonov was made the example of that? I don't know. In any case, I was sure that there was no inspiration from above for this article on Platonov and that none was needed. I judge from the fact that in the face of its pogrom-like style, it received no further replies. They didn't beat my head against the table, there was no further criticism of the journal in connection with the article of Yermilov. But the climate in those months was not such that I could try to complain somewhere about that article. Platonov's story was, in the mood of the time and the climate extant right after the decrees, vulnerable in some way, of course. We could have gotten by without it, not grabbed hold of it, but to defend it after having grabbed hold of it, and so loudly as was done by Yermilov, having, in addition, meanwhile—I repeat, meanwhile—the silent support of Fadeyev, was dangerous—not so much for the journalist and his editor as for the author himself. On the whole we swallowed the pill: we did not have it in us to take it through to the end, to the top, in this case.

Soon after, in the twelfth issue of the Leningrad journal ZVEZDA, I printed my own very hastily written play "The Russian Question." My thoughts were chiefly occupied with the novel that would later appear under the title "Smoke of the Fatherland." I was preparing for it, writing the first notes, but the trip to America required a commentator's return. Erenburg wrote a number of articles, while I, aside from two articles on the American theater, had not managed anything along the lines of commentary. It seemed to me that to say that I knew more and knew it better, had observed more closely—not so much even in America as in Japan before that—the political and moral problems associated with the life and activity of the American press—could be better done in dramatic form. So I wrote "The Russian Question"—a play whose action was concentrated in general around the problem with which our trip to America had been connected—did the Russians want war? We had tried to prove to them as well as we could, tried to prove and tried to tell them—and this was the real truth—that the Russians did not want war, did not want it and could not want it. To say this and prove it was our chief aim—both spiritual and propagandistic—and corresponded completely to the truth as well. The basic attacks on the Soviet Union that were addressed toward us in one form or another when we had come to the United States were based on the opposite point of view: the Russian communists want to conquer the free world. And America should understand the full extent of

this danger. This sounds today, as I write it in recalling all of this, like quite an old song, but then it was comparatively new, and we truly loathed it with every fiber of our being.

And so, instead of the commentary on America that was expected from me at various editorial boards, I wrote the play "The Russian Question" in three weeks and, as I have already mentioned, had it printed in ZVEZDA. It was intended for production in a single theater—the Lenin Komsomol—but it went into five Moscow theaters—the Arts, Little, Vakhtangova, Mossovet and Lenin Komsomol—and three in Leningrad—the Aleksandrinsky, the Bolshoy Drama and the Comedy Theater. As it turned out, Stalin, who had followed the journal ZVEZDA very attentively after the Central Committee decree—a Moscow worker from the agitprop department of the Central Committee, Professor Yegorin, was serving as editor of that journal along with another job—had read the play and it had seemed to him both good and useful—the latter for him both as a policy of which I had not yet become convinced played a paramount role, while the tasteful impressions were secondary—and the play "The Russian Question" began to be widely produced. The play would probably have been widespread across the country anyway, but naturally no one would have put it into five Moscow theaters at once.

I do not remember now what came first—the Stalin Prize for this play before the order for its production in five Moscow theaters, or the production first and then the prize. But that is not the heart of the matter, but rather, how categorical the directive was. When I came to the Committee on Artistic Affairs and asked the chairman at the time—grant me this in hindsight—that the play at least not be produced in the fifth Moscow theater, the Vakhtangova—which I had been the last to hear, he just spread his hands in answer and said that this issue had been decided, and not by him, and that he had no possibility of changing anything.

In the spring of 1947—the premieres of "Russian People" had already taken place in Moscow and Leningrad—I found out from my Leningrad friends, from Yuriy Pavlovich German, with whom I had become acquainted in the north, in Murmansk and Polyarny during the war, that Mikhail Zoshchenko had several dozen partisan stories that he had written during the war but had not been printed. These Zoshchenko stories were offered for printing at one time, but then things turned out the way they did, and they were lying around without movement and without prospects. And these stories could not arouse any objections in their essence, they simply were not all of the same interest—some were more interesting, some less interesting—but from the point of view of reliability of what was set forth in the stories, from the point of view of the respect of the author for the heroes of these stories, they were beyond reproach. The point was not the stories themselves, but that they had been written by Zoshchenko, of whom it had been said in the report of Zhdanov that he had a

corrupt and decadent socio-political and literary physiognomy, while in the Central Committee decree he had been called a vulgar person and scum. But the stories could be printed in and of themselves and the first step thereby taken to extract Zoshchenko from the horrifying position he was in—and if you were suddenly to up and decide...

That is how the discussion ended, or roughly so. I thought and thought and then decided—first to call Zoshchenko to Moscow and read his stories, and then to select about half of them that seemed better to me and, acting at my own risk, without discussing it with the editorial board, retype these stories along with a brief foreword by Zoshchenko, send them to Zhdanov, who was at the time in Moscow and handled questions of ideology, along with my letter that I felt it was possible to print these stories in NOVYY MIR and seeking the permission of the Central Committee in connection with all of the known prior events.

I brought these stories with my letter and passed them by hand to Zhdanov's assistant Aleksandr Nikolayevich Kuznetsov, a good person, in my opinion, goodwilled toward writers, including myself.

Some time passed. I began phoning Kuznetsov. "No, he hasn't read them yet." Again: "No, Andrey Aleksandrovich has not had time to read them yet." "Yes, I reminded him, but he hasn't had time to read them yet."

Finally, after the next call, Kuznetsov told me confidently that as far as he understood, Andrey Aleksandrovich was acquainted with the stories, but now, it seemed to him, there was no time for Andrey Aleksandrovich to meet with me, and he advised me to call him himself, but no sooner than in two weeks.

I heeded this advice and began to wait.

Meanwhile Fadeyev, having prepared the corresponding materials with me and the other secretaries, sent a letter to Stalin with a request to receive the leaders of the Writers' Union on two issues that were posed in the letter.

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Chief among these two questions was the question of changes in author's rights in connection with the difficult material position of authors extant after the war. The second was the question of re-organizing the Writers' Union, its new pay rates and salaries, in connection with the much greater volume of tasks before it.

And here, either on the morning of May 13 or the night before, I cannot remember any more, it was reported to Fadeyev, Gorbachev and me that Stalin would receive us on May 13 at six o'clock in the evening and to go to the Kremlin at that time.



Later I will have to cite the transcript I dictated to my stenographer the day after the meeting. I made exactly the same notes on the same day or the following one in certain circumstances when we were called in to see Stalin. Everything that was immediately recorded by me I cite completely, since it was written down. But, for a number of reasons, I did not write down everything. I left out a number of issues, problems and names that I felt it was impossible to note down at the time. I remember these meetings quite well, which, however, does not rule out some petty inaccuracies, but namely petty ones, and this gives me the opportunity today of making entries where I had left omissions at one time. In order to understand this system of recording, I must consciously become engrossed in the times and imagine, naturally, not only whatever entries from the meeting with Stalin were not made and were impossible, and did not enter my head, but I hardly feel it is possible to make entries of the sort even in hindsight. In general, I wrote down what I felt justified in writing down, and I tried to keep as firmly in memory as possible that which I felt I could not write down. In the course of affairs, every time, in recalling these meetings, I will indicate where I am citing the text of notations from the time and where it is me supplementing them. I will cite the notes themselves with small corrections that have no relation to the essence of the matter, but just to the quality of the exposition, because they were made so hastily that a little literary editing is essential. I had refrained from the temptation of anything else, and it seemed to me more intelligent and farsighted than ever, that is, editing the old manuscripts for substance, a long time ago, many years ago, even before working on my military diaries, the originals of all my old military diaries that were turned over to TsGALI [USSR Central State Archives of Literature and Art] for closed storage, including those being discussed now.

And so, the entry made on May 14, 1947:

On May 13 Fadeyev, Gorbatoev and I were called at six o'clock PM to Stalin in the Kremlin. At five of six we gathered in his reception room on a very warm May day, the windows of the waiting room were were hot from the sun. There was a large table in the middle of the reception room with foreign press on it—weeklies and newspapers. I was so nervous I had some water to drink.

At three or four minutes after the hour, Poskrebyshv came into the room and invited us in. We passed through a room and opened the door to a third. It was a large office finished in a light wood with two doors—the one we had entered through and a second door at the very back of the office on the left. On the right, also at the back and far from the door, was a desk, and on the left along the wall was another table—quite long, it could seat about twenty people—for meetings.

At the head of that table, at the far end of it, sat Stalin, with Molotov next to him and Zhdanov next to Molotov. They rose to greet us. Stalin's face was serious, without a

hint of a smile. They extended their hands to us in businesslike fashion and turned back to the table. Molotov greeted us courteously, welcomed Fadeyev and me back, obviously from England, whence we had recently returned, having spent about a month there as part of our parliamentary delegation.

After that, the three of us—Fadeyev, Gorbatoev and I—sat along one side of the table, Molotov and Zhdanov sat across from us, but not quite directly across, and a little far away, closer to Stalin at the head of the table.

All of this, of course, was not so material, but I wanted to remember this meeting in all its detail.

There was red colored report file in front of Zhdanov, and a thin file before Stalin that he opened at once. It contained our letters on writers' affairs. He read the heading aloud—"To the USSR Council of Ministers"—and added something that I did not hear completely, something like so we have received a letter from you, let's talk.

The discussion began with the question of royalties.

"So you are posing the question of a review of royalties," said Stalin. "It has already been considered."

"Yes, but it has been resolved incorrectly," said Fadeyev, and began to explain that under the conditions of the existing system of royalties, writers soon ceased receiving anything for good books that get reprinted and reprinted. From there Fadeyev shifted to the question of a lack of conformity in paying for small and mass circulations, for which they were paid quite inadequately. In conclusion Fadeyev repeated that the question of royalties had been resolved incorrectly.

Having heard him out, Stalin said, "We look positively on a review of this issue. When we were establishing these royalties, we wanted to avoid such phenomena in which a writer writes just one good work and then lives off it and does nothing. Having written a good work, he sets himself up with a dacha and stops working. We don't begrudge the money," he added, smiling, "but this cannot be. Four categories of evaluations and ranking must be established in literature. The first for an excellent work, the second for a good one and the third and fourth, a rate scale should be established, what do you think?"

We answered that that was correct.

"Well then," said Stalin, "I think that this question cannot be resolved by letter or resolution, but we should work on it a little first, a commission must be created. Comrade Zhdanov," he turned to Zhdanov, "what suggestions do you have for the makeup of the commission?"

"I would join the commission," said Zhdanov.

Stalin started laughing and said, "A very modest proposal on your part."

Everyone laughed.

After this Stalin said that the commission should include the writers that were present.

"Zverev, as minister of finance," said Fadeyev.

"Well now," said Stalin, "he is an experienced person. If you wish," Stalin emphasized the word "you," "Zverev could be included. And here's someone else," he added, "Mekhlis," and looked at us searchingly. "Only he would scatter you all at once, eh?"

Everyone laughed again.

"He's an experienced man of letters nonetheless," said Zhdanov.

Having presented my entry from the time, I'll jump ahead and say that when the commission created that day gathered two or three times afterward, Mekhlis deceived our real apprehensions on his account associated with the well-known harshness of his nature. He supported all the writers' proposals on royalties, and when the financial types advanced the proposal—beginning with such-and-such a level of annual earnings, an income tax of 51 percent would be imposed on the writers—Mekhlis literally boiled over:

"You'd better think before you suggest such things. What do you want to do, tax literature as private trade? Or do you intend to consider a given writer separately as a craftsman without a motor? Or do you intend to fight the writers, like the private sector, in the name of some other form of literary organization—the writing of books not by oneself, not alone at the table?"

Mekhlis' tirade at the commission was one I well remembered for a long time. This peevish tirade at once doomed the whole tax superstructure that had been proposed for imposition on literature. Mekhlis had no predilection for either literature or writers, as far as I could tell, but he was a politician and considered literature to be part of ideology and the writers to be Soviet employees and not solitary craftsmen.

Having made this digression, or rather, having jumped a little ahead into the future, I will return to my entry for May 14 of 1947:

"And so, who's on the commission?" asked Stalin.

Zhdanov enumerated those who were proposed for inclusion on the commission.

"Good," said Stalin. "Now a second question: you have asked that the staff be increased. Their staffing must be increased."

Zhdanov objected that the staff being proposed by Writers' Union was inflated nonetheless. A hundred and twenty people instead of seventy.

"They have a new volume of work," said Stalin, "the staff must be increased."

Zhdanov repeated that the staffing planned by the union must be cut anyway.

"It must be increased nonetheless," said Stalin. "There are new sectors where it must not only be increased, but staffing must be created. And there are sectors where the staff has ballooned and must be cut. The staffing must be increased."

And the issue of staffing ended there.

The next question concerned writers' housing affairs.

Fadeyev began explaining how poor the housing situation was for the writers and how they were in need of help in that regard, the more so as housing for writers is essentially their workplace as well.

Stalin listened attentively to all of the explanations of Fadeyev and said that the commission would include the chairman of the Moscow City Soviet and investigate this question. Then, falling silent, he asked: "Then that's all you have?"

Up to then our meeting with Stalin had not gone on very long, and I suddenly had a great regret: now everything was being cut off, ending, yes, strictly speaking, it had already ended.

"If that is all you have, then I have a question for you. What themes are the writers developing now?"

Fadeyev answered that the central theme for the writers remained the war as before, while contemporary life, including production and industry, were still much less reflected in literature, and moreover, one would find that to be true most of all for the average writers.

"It is true," Fadeyev said, "that we sent some writers on creative trips, we sent about a hundred people, but for the most part they were average writers."

"And why weren't they major writers?" asked Stalin. "Don't they want to?"

"It is difficult to shake them loose," said Fadeyev.

"They don't want to go," said Stalin. "And do you feel there is sense in these trips?"

We answered that there was. In trying to proving it, Fadeyev referred to the first five-year plans, to "Hydro Central" of Shaginyan, to "Time, Forward!" by Katayev and several other books.

"But then Tolstoy didn't go on trips," said Stalin.

Fadeyev objected that Tolstoy wrote about exactly the environment he lived in at Yasnoye Polyano.

"I felt that when a serious writer works seriously, he himself goes where he needs to," said Stalin. "Sholokhov doesn't go on trips?" he asked and fell silent.

"He is always traveling," said Fadeyev of Sholokhov.

"And doesn't want to leave it?" asked Stalin.

"No," said Fadeyev, "he doesn't want to come to the city."

"He is afraid of the city," said Stalin.

Silence fell. Before this, in telling about trips, Fadeyev had cited several examples of how difficult it was to send major writers on trips. The name Katayev had been mentioned among others. Evidently remembering that, Stalin suddenly asked: "And what about Katayev, he doesn't want to go?"

Fadeyev answered that Katayev was now working on a novel that would be the continuation of his "The Lone Sail Grows Whiter," and that Katayev's new work was also connected with Odessa, with his fundamental themes.

"So he is working on a serious theme?" Stalin asked.

"A serious one, a fundamental one for him," we confirmed.

Silence fell again.

"Here's a theme that is very important," said Stalin, "that writers need to get interested in. It is the theme of our Soviet patriotism. If we take the average intelligentsia, the academic intelligentsia, the professors, the physicians," said Stalin, constructing phrases with the peculiar intonation characteristic of him that I distinctly remembered, which, I think, I could literally recreate, "we do not have a sufficiently cultivated feeling of Soviet patriotism. We have an unjustified admiration for foreign culture. Everyone still feels himself to be incomplete, not one hundred percent, is accustomed to considering himself in the position of perpetual student. This is a backward tradition, it comes from Peter. Peter had good ideas, but crawled to the Germans too soon, this was the first admiration for the Germans. Look how difficult it was to breathe, how difficult it was to work for Lomonosov, for example. First the Germans, then the French, there was admiration of foreigners," said Stalin and suddenly, screwing up his eyes in sly fashion, rhymed in barely audible fashion "for-shamers," laughed and was serious once more.

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"The simple peasant does not bow down for trifles, he won't tip his cap, but such people do not have enough dignity, patriotism or understanding of the role that Russia plays. The military also had such an admiration. It has become less today. Today no, today they are on a high horse."

Stalin stopped, laughed and showed with an imperceptible gesture how the military had gotten on a high horse. Then he asked:

"Why are we worse? What is going on? This point must be hammered away at for years, for ten years we've had to hammer away at it. This is what happens: a person does a great deed and he himself doesn't understand it," and he again began talking about the professor that he had already mentioned. "Take such a person, not the last person," repeated Stalin emphatically once again, "and he bows down three times to any foreign scoundrel, any scientist three ranks below him, he loses his dignity. That is how it seems to me. We must fight the spirit of self-diminishment among much of our intelligentsia."

Stalin turned to Zhdanov: "Give me the document."

Zhdanov took out several sheets of text fastened together from the file. Stalin leafed through them, there were four or five pages in the document. Having done so, Stalin rose from the table and, giving the document to Fadeyev, said "Here, take it and read it aloud."

Fadeyev read it aloud. It was a document directly connected with all of what Stalin was talking about. I cannot yet set forth its contents here...

The document, the contents of which at the time, May 14, 1947, I felt it was impossible to set forth, was later published in the press as a letter on the so-called Klyuyeva and Roskin affair.<sup>1</sup> The appearance of this letter in the press was the beginning of the fight against self-diminishment, of a feeling of less than a hundred percent, with the unjustified admiration of foreign culture, that Stalin was talking about, that had been hammered away at for many years.

This fight very quickly came to be simply and briefly formulated as a fight against servility to foreigners and also quickly took on the diverse abortive forms that almost always distinguish ideological warfare, becoming transformed into a noisy political campaign, on the one hand, whipped up, and on the other, taking on dangerous elements of self-development. Much of what was written and printed then is shameful to read today, including that which emerged from one's own pen or over one's own editorial signature. But in the face of all that later developed so abnormally into the campaign noted in some of its manifestations as barbarism in the press, and sometimes overt baseness, the very idea of the necessity of a fight against self-diminishment and a feeling of less



than a hundred percent and the unjustified admiration for that which was alien in combination with the consignment of one's own to oblivion had a kernel of sense at the time, in the spring of 1947. Elements of all this really did exist and were manifested in society, the spiritual danger that had arisen was not a contrivance, and the question, of course, was not reduced to rejecting spiritual struggle against such phenomena, including by literary means, but rather how to wage this struggle—methods suited to it and corresponding to it, essentially speaking, lofty public goals, or methods that were coarse and shameful, intimidating but not convincing people, that is those who most often later waged it.

Fadeyev began reading the letter that Stalin had given him. Stalin had beforehand, at the beginning of the discussion, stood more than sat, or took several steps back and forth behind his chair or armchair. When Fadeyev began reading the letter, Stalin continued walking, but not in the same place, taking several steps back and forth along the table on our side and looking at us. Many years have passed, but I remember my unrecorded feelings precisely. In order not to sit with his back to the pacing Stalin, Fadeyev had instinctively half turned to him, continuing to read the letter, and Gorbakov and I also turned. Stalin walked and listened as Fadeyev read, listened very attentively, with a serious and even tense expression on his face. He listened to with what intonations Fadeyev read, he wanted to know what Fadeyev felt, reading this letter, and what we were experiencing listening to it being read. Continuing to walk, he threw glances at us, tracking the impression made on us by the reading.

Before this, from the very beginning of the meeting I had felt quite different, quite free in the atmosphere which depended on Stalin and which he created. Now I felt tense and uncomfortable. He looked at us and listened to Fadeyev reading in such a way that there was a hint of some danger behind it—and not in general, but for us in particular—seated there. He was making a test, checking—evidently, on the first people from this category, a famous and two well-known authors—what impression was produced in us, members of the intelligentsia, communists, but members of the intelligentsia, by what he had dictated in this letter about Klyuyeva and Roskin, also two members of the intelligentsia. Dictated or perhaps wrote himself, it was completely possible. In any case, this letter was dictated at his will and no other.

When Fadeyev had read the letter to the end, Stalin, convinced that what had been read had made an impression on us—and it really had—evidently felt it was extraneous or unnecessary to even ask our opinion about it.

Now, many years later, in recalling those minutes, I am grateful to him for this.

As my entry made on May 14, 1947 testifies, when the letter was read, Stalin only repeated where he had started: "We must destroy the spirit of self-diminishment," and added, "A work must be written on this. A novel."

I said that it was more likely a theme for a play.

Before citing my old entry further, I will interrupt myself here and add that these words jumped out of me quite unexpectedly, simply as a professional consideration that really did suggest that the topic being discussed was sooner for the stage than a book. At that moment I was not thinking of myself, I was not thinking that I was a dramatist myself, I was in the very middle of the novel "Smoke of the Fatherland" and was not thinking of and was in no condition to think of anything else, feeling that, finishing up that work, as a writer I would be fulfilling my most direct party duty. Perhaps it was due to unconsciousness to any other possibilities aside from that that this cursed phrase jumped out: "More likely a play," later posing a very severe problem for me, which I did not foresee in the slightest at the time, the more so as Stalin, it seemed, had paid no attention whatsoever to my reply.

Returning to my entry for the day:

"We must counter the attitude toward this issue of such people as here," said Stalin, nodding to the document on the table, "the attitude of the simple fighters, soldiers and simple people. People have had this disease, it has been established for a very long time, since the time of Peter, and people still have it."

"New times but an old consciousness," said Zhdanov.

"Consciousness," laughed Stalin, "It always lags. The consciousness comes late," and again returned to what he had been talking about. "We must work on that theme."

He then shifted to a question I cannot write here...

Here I have to stop myself in the middle of the sentence that was written at the time and relate what sort of question that was—quite unexpected for all three of us. Naturally, it would be strange after so many years to pretend to a word-for-word exposition of what was said but not written down then, but I have had occasion to recall it so many times later, especially during my work as editor of LITERATURNAYA GAZETA—both out of inner and official necessity—that it has stuck in my memory much more firmly than much else from such mental repetition of the conversation that took place at the time. It was essentially not so much a discussion as a half-hour monologue by Stalin that began with the words "We think here"—Stalin generally and, as I recall and as I wrote down at the time, rarely said "I" and preferred "we."

"We think here," he said, "that the Writers' Union could begin to put out a quite different LITERATURNAYA GAZETA than it does now. The Writers' Union could through its own efforts put out a LITERATURNAYA GAZETA that would simultaneously be not only literary, but political as well, a large, mass newspaper. The Writers' Union could put out a newspaper that would sharply, more sharply than other newspapers, pose questions of international life, and if needed, then domestic life as well. All of our newspapers are in one way or another official newspapers, while LITERATURNAYA GAZETA is the newspaper of the Writers' Union, it could pose questions unofficially, including such as we cannot or do not want to pose officially. As an unofficial newspaper, LITERATURNAYA GAZETA could let itself go more sharply and more to the left than us on some issues than the officially expressed point of view. It is wholly possible that we will sometimes criticize LITERATURNAYA GAZETA for it, but it should not fear this, it should, despite the criticism, continue to go about its business."

I remember very well that Stalin smirked at these words.

"You should understand that we cannot always officially say what we would like to say, such cases occur in politics, and LITERATURNAYA GAZETA should help us in those situations. And in general, there is no need to fear too much, look around too much, you should not consult with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on your articles on international issues, the Ministry of Internal Affairs should not read these articles. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is occupied with its own affairs, and LITERATURNAYA GAZETA with its own. How many copies of the newspaper do you put out now?"

Fadeyev answered that the circulation of the newspaper was somewhere around fifty thousand.

"It must be ten times more. How many times a month does it come out?"

"Four times, once a week," answered Fadeyev.

"There must be a new LITERATURNAYA GAZETA that comes out twice a week, so that it is read twice, not once, a week, and by ten times more people. What is your opinion, will the Writers' Union be able to put out such a newspaper?"

We answered that we probably could.

"And when can you begin to do it?"

I do not remember which of us answered, maybe even I did, recalling now how hastily I had accepted the journal, that such output of a completely new type of newspaper would probably require several months of preparation and it could obviously begin to be out somewhere around the first of September, at the beginning of the fall.

"Correct," said Stalin, "preparation is needed, of course. There is no need to rush. And you should ask for what you will need to put out such a newspaper, and we will help you. And we furthermore think that when you begin putting out this newspaper and have managed it, we, maybe, will propose that you create your own, in-house unofficial telegraph agency at LITERATURNAYA GAZETA to receive and disseminate unofficial information."

That was roughly the monologue of Stalin, which took, as I wrote at the time, roughly half an hour.

The text which I am writing down now, when reading it aloud, would be confined to about ten minutes, but I do not think that I was so off then in writing "half an hour." Stalin, as always, spoke very unhurriedly, sometimes repeated what was stated, stopping, falling silent, thinking, strolling around. He had evidently thought through the question ahead of time, but some details and twists came to him then, in the course of the discussion. It seemed to me, for example, that the idea of creating a telegraph agency arose suddenly and on the spot after some prolonged pause during which he reflected on it, and he stated it with satisfaction, he was pleased with it.

It seemed to me in general that he himself really liked the idea of creating another, new LITERATURNAYA GAZETA and the additional idea of creating an unofficial telegraph agency. He spoke of it with satisfaction, he liked the fact that we liked the idea, and he felt that it would inculcate us with a determination to approach all issues associated with the future of the newspaper more boldly and freely.

Stalin concluded his discussion of LITERATURNAYA GAZETA with the fact that, he said, it was evident that we would have to think about new people, new workers, a new editorial board for the new newspaper, and perhaps a new editor, but we were to think about all this ourselves, it was our affair.

Thus—not from an idea of the Writers' Union, as it is accepted to feel, but from an idea of Stalin—a LITERATURNAYA GAZETA quite different than before began coming out several months later, true, without its unofficial telegraph agency. APN, the initial idea of creating which was expressed at the time, on May 13, 1947, was created many years after this and after the death of Stalin.

I return to my entry for 1947:

When the question of LITERATURNAYA GAZETA was resolved, Stalin asked us half expectantly, "Well, any questions, then?"

I said, "Comrade Stalin, may I ask a question?"

"Please, even two," said Stalin.

I said that in editing the journal for half a year I had already encountered many difficulties therein in the postulation of public issues. I did not have enough volume to really make the journal a public-policy one as well as a literary and artistic one, because if we, say, print a short novel in an issue, then the journal is twelve type pages, and in desiring that the reader read all of this novel at once, we would print on these twelve sheets only several verses, one or two critical articles and a biography, due to which it was necessary to refrain from sketches and interesting academic materials, and I would have liked to give the journal a broader profile.

I, having begun to speak, forgot to say what journal I edited, and Zhdanov felt it necessary to present me as the editor of NOVYY MIR.

"So," said Stalin, "And won't it turn out differently, won't you not have enough material for that journal? Because I have observed that editors have the opposite tendency—to double up the issues. ZNAMYA, OKT-YABR, NOVYY MIR—they have all doubled up issues."

I answered that NOVYY MIR had not been doubled up that year, that I would not double it up, that I had material so that, if one imagines the average member of the intelligentsia in the provinces, with no opportunity to subscribe to three or four journals and gets just one, I wanted to see that he received a more encyclopedic journal so that reading this journal would widen his cultural horizons in all-round fashion. To this I added that, beginning to edit the journal, I read a number of issues of SOVREMENNİK and was convinced of the breadth and diversity of the questions it posed.

Stalin said, "That is true. The journal SOVREMENNYY MIR, for example, the journal MIR BOZHIY (Zhdanov said that at first it was MIR BOZHIY and then SOVREMENNYY MIR) posed questions of academics quite broadly, and this, of course, was very interesting for the reader. True, at the time there was no such journal as ZNANIYE-SILA, as TEKHNİKA MOLODEZHI and other scientific journals."

Breaking away from my entry of the time, I say now that when Stalin, after the issue of SOVREMENNİK I cited, suddenly named not only SOVREMENNYY MIR but also MIR BOZHIY, I thought for a second that I had misheard, so strange did it sound to me to hear the name of the journal BOZHIY MIR in combination with the fact that it was Stalin himself who recalled it in connection with SOVREMENNİK. Only in the next day or two, with the aid of the Lenin Library, did I become acquainted with the sets of the journal BOZHIY MIR and completely bring myself out of the first feeling of surprise. BOZHIY MIR, if I am not in error in remembering it now, was edited by Bogdanovich, one of the most leftist and progressive Russian editors of the beginning of the century. The journal really did pose academic themes broadly, and from the point of view of its overall

direction the journal was run in a spirit of legal Marxism, and its title MIR BOZHIY was simple and convenient and eased the screening of it. That is the journal remembered by Stalin, and after him Zhdanov.

Returning to the entry of the time:

"And you will be supplied with material if we increase your volume?" asked Stalin again.

I said that we could not be free of errors and before, with twelve type pages to the issue, we sometimes erred, that errors and blunders were possible in the future as well, but I thought that there would prove to be enough material, I would make every effort to make a journal of value in an eighteen-sheet size. I asked that—whether we were or were not successful in making a journal of value in that size—they try it out on me, and if I managed to handle this over the second half of the year, it would be possible to pose the question of the further output of the journal in that size, and if I didn't handle it, the size could always be reduced and brought back to today's.

"Yes," said Stalin, "the journal was better. Here ZVEZDA prints interesting articles, often more interesting than BOLSHEVIK, philosophical articles, academic ones. ZVEZDA and NOVYY MIR have become appreciably better. But won't it turn out anyway that you won't have enough material?" repeated Stalin persistently for the third time.

I said again that I would make every effort.

"Well, all right, it must be done, it must be tried," said Stalin. "But if you do it, all the other journals will make noise. What about that?"

I asked that we at first try it with us, with NOVYY MIR, and then it would be evident from our experience.

Fadeyev supported me, saying that it was worth it to try it until the end of the year with one journal, and then it would be evident.

"Good," agreed Stalin. "Go ahead. Go ahead and increase NOVYY MIR. How many sheets do you need?"

I repeated what I had said—eighteen.

"We will give you seventeen," said Stalin.

I said that since scientific and international departments would be created at the journal, we would have to increase the staffing. I would need two department chiefs.

Stalin smiled: "Well, submit that to the commission too."

Zhdanov said that he had my petition on pay scales for journal workers.



"We don't begrudge the money," said Stalin and repeated, "We don't begrudge the money."

I explained that our department chief received just twelve hundred rubles (at the rates of the time, naturally—K.S.).

"The commission should also resolve this issue," said Stalin and repeated, "He must be helped. Give the money. Only you take him and print, and then pay. Why give gifts? Print—then pay."

Zhdanov said that he had recently received an impassioned letter from a certain writer.

"Do not believe impassioned letters, Comrade Zhdanov." Everyone laughed.

"Later, when everything is in the past, I will fill in this place some more," I wrote in my entry then. What had I intended to add, what would be in the past? This is what. After Stalin, with a positive attitude toward all my suggestions as editor of NOVYY MIR, after all this answered Fadeyev some more about this writer, whose name I omitted then out of a feeling of tact and now cannot recall, "print it and pay"—I suddenly resolved to do something I had not yet resolved to do, although I had remembered, and I spoke of Zoshchenko, about his "Partisan Stories" based on the records of the partisans themselves, that I had selected some of these stories, wanted to print them in NOVYY MIR and was asking his permission.

"And have you read these stories of Zoshchenko?" Stalin asked, turning to Zhdanov.

"No," said Zhdanov, "I haven't read them."

"And you have read them?" Stalin asked me.

"I have," I said and explained that there were about twenty Zoshchenko stories in all, but I had only selected the ten of them that I felt were the best.

"So you as an editor feel that these are good stories? That they could be printed?"

I answered yes.

"Well, if you as an editor feel that they should be printed, then print them. And we will read them when you print them."

I think now, after many years, that Stalin's last sentence had some of his characteristic half-concealed humor, not without danger to his interlocutor, but, of course, I cannot vouch for this. These are my guesses today, I didn't think this at the time, I was too nervous—at first by the fact that I had decided to bring up Zoshchenko

myself, and then by the fact that Zhdanov had, unexpectedly for me, said that he had not read the stories when, according to my conceptions, he had; then by the fact that Stalin permitted the printing of these stories.

It all could have been somewhat different, of course, than I thought at the time, the possibility must be allowed that Zhdanov had read these stories, that he did not want to talk about them with me, knowing or supposing that there would soon be a meeting between Stalin and the writers, including with me. I admit that before this meeting, when Zhdanov had received the Zoshchenko stories from me, he could have assumed that I had decided to speak with him about them and, having read them beforehand, had spoken about it with Stalin ahead of time and thus answered that he had not read the stories so as to see how I would express my own opinion there afterward, with Stalin. That is one course of my reflections today in favor of Zhdanov. But it could also have been otherwise, there could have been no discussion, Stalin could not believe or did not believe until the end that Zhdanov had not read these stories, and then the concealed irony of his last words were evidently not related to me.

It now remains for me only to bring to a close my record of 1947 with one more addition—restoring the name that I had omitted from my entry at the time.

"What is your opinion of Vanda Vasilevskaya as a writer?" Stalin asked at the end of the conversation. "In your inner writers' circles? What is their attitude toward her last novel?"

"Not too good," said Fadeyev.

"Why not?" asked Stalin.

"They do not feel that it is very well written."

"And how do you regard her overall as a writer in your circles?"

"As an average writer," said Fadeyev.

"As an average writer?" repeated Stalin.

"Yes, as an average writer," repeated Fadeyev.

Stalin looked at him silently and, it seemed to me that this evaluation had distressed him somehow. But he did not express it outwardly and did not object. He asked us whether we had any more questions. We answered that we did not.

"Then that is all." Stalin rose. Zhdanov and Molotov rose behind him.

"Goodbye," said Stalin and made a parting gesture to us that I had seen for the first time when, many years ago, I had first passed through Red Square in a parade—half a salute and half a wave.

Stalin had been dressed in the gray color of a military jacket and gray trousers over his boots. A spacious coat, with a half-belt on the back. His face was quite lean. For the greater part of the discussion he had stood or taken several steps back and forth in front of the table. He smoked a crooked pipe. He smoked very little, by the way. He lit it, inhaled once, then after several minutes lit it again, inhaled again, and it went out again, but he had it in his hand almost all the time. Sometimes, going up to his desk, he put his thumbs behind the back of the chair and drummed the rest of his fingers lightly on it. He smiled often during the discussion, but when we spoke of the main topic that occupied him—patriotism and self-diminishment—his face was harsh and he spoke of it with passion in his voice, and two or three times some intonations of agitation crept into his generally peaceful voice.

These words conclude my record made at the time on May 14, 1947 of my first meeting with Stalin or, more precisely, the first meeting with him in which I took part. It lasted, as far as I can remember, for about three hours. It is possible that some details have been missed either in my record or in my supplements to it due to failures of memory, but I have not left anything out intentionally and, it seems to me now, I have not forgotten anything.

#### Footnote

1. In the pre-war years, Professors N.G. Klyuyeva and G.I. Roskin created the anti-cancer drug "KR" ("Krutin," French analogue "Tripazon"), the question of the effectiveness of which still evokes disputes among specialists. At the request of the authors, the manuscript of their monograph that had come out in the Soviet Union, "Biotherapy of Malignant Tumors" (USSR AMN Publishing House, Moscow, 1946), was transmitted to American publishers by USSR AMN Secretary Academician V.V. Parin during his visit to the United States in 1946 as scientific information. Stalin, having been convinced of the great value of "KR," felt this was the release of a most important state secret. V.V. Parin was sentenced to 25 years for espionage. N.G. Klyuyeva and G.I. Roskin, as well as the Minister of Health Care, G.A. Miterev, who was removed from his position, appeared before a "court of honor," and a widespread campaign was conducted across the whole country to condemn all of the participants in this episode as cosmopolitans. After the 20th CPSU Congress, they were all completely rehabilitated. (See: Ya. Rapoport. The "KR" Affair; V. Brodskiy, V. Kalinnikova. A Discovery was Made. *NAUKA I ZHIZN*, 1988, No 1.)

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[Text]

March 9, 1979

Several days after our meeting with Stalin, Zhdanov's aide Kuznetsov called me and said that I could come by and become familiar with the materials for my work.

When I went to Kuznetsov, he gave me a file with various papers and said that that he was familiarizing me with them at the request of Andrey Aleksandrovich. When going there, I had vaguely assumed what the issue could be, and there I became convinced that my guess was correct. They were materials associated with the same so-called Klyuyeva and Roskin affair. There was not that much material, I read it all in thirty or forty minutes while sitting in Kuznetsov's office and, thanking him, returned them to him. It seems that Kuznetsov was a little surprised at how quickly I had read them and, when I had risen, asked me, "So then, can I tell Andrey Aleksandrovich that you have been acquainted with the materials?"

I answered in the affirmative and, thanking him, went home.

The materials did not make any particular impression on me simply because they added little to the feeling not so much of the importance of the story of Klyuyeva and Roskin itself as the importance of the problem of eliminating the spirit of self-diminishment, as Stalin expressed it. I was not so naive as not to understand what the point was of acquainting me with this additional material—evidently, with the remark that I had tossed out that it was more likely a theme for a play than a novel, the idea had been imparted that I was ready to take up the pen for a play on that theme. In fact I was in no way ready for this, and I was troubled by this understanding of my purely professional observation. I could have written a play on this theme in principle, it seemed to me, but not now, when I was working on the novel "Smoke of the Fatherland," in which I was resolving as I was able the problems of juxtaposing genuine Soviet patriotism with superficial patriotism, the beer-hall variety associated with self-advertisement and an unwillingness to accept anything alien just because it was alien. The words of Stalin on destroying the spirit of self-diminishment had affected me inwardly namely because I was writing about something similar in my novel, writing about people who were proud of their poor, wounded and suffering country in the face of all of the American postwar might and well-being.

Distracted by this work, which I was doing in addition using material personally experienced, I wanted least of all to cut it in half and take up a play on a theme so close to mine—the harm and spiritual poverty of groveling—based on material very far from mine and still quite alien to me.

I understood that I had landed in an ambiguous situation and cursed myself for my incautious reply, but I calmed myself with the fact that after the novel I could take up

the play—and I ultimately convinced myself that everything would work out all right. I had received no direct assignment, I had taken on no direct obligation, and I must write the novel, which was not yet finished, without looking up, and then it would be evident. Obviously the decision was correct and the sole possible one for me as a writer, and I did not repent it afterward, although it cost me quite dearly later.

By the end of the summer I had finished "Smoke of the Fatherland," which in its first, journal version ran over eleven type sheets. No one reminded me of the materials I had seen, and its seemed to me that everything had turned out and that someone else would write a play or something on the immediate theme associated with the Klyuyeva and Roskin affair. But then, when they had given over these materials to me to look over, it turned out later, they on the contrary felt that I would sit right down and write exactly that play.

It was favorable to print the ten Zoshchenko stories and his foreword in the September issue of NOVYY MIR, and my novel was put in the November issue. I liked it very much myself, and perhaps neither before nor after have I had such an enthusiastic and non-self-critical attitude toward anything else of mine. It truly seemed to me that although I was the editor of NOVYY MIR, I had the right to print my own novel in its pages by the date of the thirtieth anniversary of Soviet power.

Maybe this was incorrect for the theme, for the inner spiritual charge in the novel, but the novel in the form in which it was printed was very dense, verbose and not wrung out. I understood all of this seven years later, when I was preparing the novel for separate printing—without altering either the spirit or the thrust or the plot of it, I wrung out of it like excess water almost four sheets out of the eleven without any particular effort. But at the time, in September of 1947, it seemed to me that I was cutting out gold nuggets, and I was supported in this delusion in discussions of the novel at the Writers' Union with Fadeyev, Fedin and Erenburg, who all took it to heart in the face of all the diversity of their tastes, and all three of them, paying no attention to its sins, generously praised me for the main things in the novel.

As for me, I went about happy with what I had done, and it seemed to me that having shown the loftiness of spirit and moral force of people rising from ashes utterly destroyed by war, the tattered Smolenshchina, and having juxtaposed all of that with American self-satisfaction with their way of life and standard of living, I had fulfilled my chief party duty that I had inwardly reckoned after the long foreign trip and landing immediately in Smolenshchina. It was not "The Russian Question," which by that time had received a first-category Stalin prize but was nonetheless written not about us, but rather about the Americans, but namely "Smoke of the Fatherland," written about us and our fully deprived, poor and proud life in the time right after the war, that was the fulfillment of my chief duty for me. With this

awareness I awaited the issue of the journal and the far from fine day—I don't remember the date now, I would have to flip through issues of the newspaper KULTURA I ZHIZN for 1947—when an article appeared in the newspaper about my beloved "Smoke of the Fatherland" with the title "Despite the Truth of Life," which promised nothing good.

The story of that article, very spiteful and very incomprehensible, and in places simply not at all understandable in the most elementary sense of the word, was later told to me by the late Boris Sergeyevich Ryurikov, who was working at the Central Committee at the time and was then my comrade-in-arms at LITERATURNAYA GAZETA. He liked my novel, and when Zhdanov, who also liked the novel, asked who was prepared to be the author of an article on "Smoke of the Fatherland" in the agitprop organ—the newspaper KULTURA I ZHIZN, directive in spirit and purpose—Ryurikov was called upon to write an article evaluating my novel positively. He was called upon and did write the article, and it was already in newspaper type pages, when suddenly everything turned around. Zhdanov came back from Stalin, removed Ryurikov's article from the issue and another author was summoned to Zhdanov who was ordered to write a different article, and he wrote it in emergency fashion after receiving the corresponding instructions, and it was the one I read the next day, not believing my own eyes. Why not? Because I understood that just like the blow against "Young Guard" by Fadeyev, also struck in the same newspaper, on the same page, the devastating article on "Smoke of the Fatherland" had appeared only because Stalin had a sharp dislike of the novel. I sought no other explanations and acted correctly. And I did not believe my eyes because I was most profoundly convinced that this novel was just what the people needed now, that it would reinforce their belief in their own strength, their pride in their country in the difficult time for us after the war—in short, it seemed to me that Stalin could not help but like it. And now, it turned out, the complete opposite.

I read and reread the article several times, and the passages that remained incomprehensible to me reminded me of a telephone out of order. It suddenly occurred to me that an angry Stalin could have said something unfavorable and spiteful about this novel—and whether he spoke while walking around, not caring very much whether they heard him well—we had felt our own tiredness from the tension of the three hours after our discussion with Stalin in which we had tried not to miss a single word spoken by him. He spoke, now coming closer, now moving further away, now louder, now softer, sometimes almost behind the listener, beginning and ending a sentence without turning around. That is how I imagined it, that he had expressed his dissatisfaction in sentences of which parts were heard and parts were not. He was very dissatisfied, but by what exactly they were unable to hear completely, and it was obviously not done to question him again.



Zhdanov, having come from Stalin and transmitted to the author of the article what Stalin had said, had evidently said what he had heard, and he evidently had not heard everything. The out-of-order phone was next to the conscience of the author of the article, who could leave out nothing of what was told to him and what he had noted down, but he could not connect it with anything consistent or structured. For about a week I went around thinking what was wrong with the novel. I was reproached for the fact that the people in it only talked and didn't do anything. The whole novel related just the first day of the visit of my hero to his native land, his first meeting with his relatives, all the rest was in detached recollections of the war and of America. What could he do in those hours? I tried hard to understand what Stalin was dissatisfied with. I was not angry about the article or at the author—it would have been the same as getting mad at a chair when you were mistaken and hitting it. I was distressed and wanted to understand what I had done wrong. Why did they want something different from me than I wanted myself and could do as a communist, as a person confident of his correctness, and at the same time as a person who was not mighty and did not want to doubt inwardly the correctness of Stalin as the highest authority for me on the ideological and political issues discussed in the novel?

A week later I requested that I be received by Zhdanov and, going to see him, said directly that I had read the article more than once in which, evidently, I had been correctly criticized, but I did not understand many places in it nonetheless and could not understand why the novel was felt to have been written despite the truth of life, and, even more important, I could not understand what I had to do in further work on it so that it would not prove to be against the truth of life. I did not conceal my confusion or the extent of my distress and lack of comprehension at all.

Zhdanov patiently tried for about an hour to explain to me what was wrong with my novel. He did not go beyond the bounds of the article that had been printed in *KULTURA I ZHIZN* therein, and he spoke of the same things—more intelligently, subtly and intellectually than it was written. But the more he explained to me, the more clearly the feeling arose in me that he did not know himself how to explain to me what was written in the article: that he, like I, did not understand either why the novel was so bad, as was written, or what was to be done further with it. I had seen Zhdanov both sharp and irritable before this, true, not personally toward me. This time I had gone to see him fully prepared for a sharp conversation on his part. But he, on the contrary, was patient, benevolent and, it seemed to me, not inwardly convinced of what he was saying to me, and therefore a little confused. I didn't know then that he himself liked my novel and that he was forced to speak to me about it in a way that differed from his own initial perceptions of it. I did not know it, but I felt something surprising to me in this conversation.

I thanked him for the discussion and left, and nothing new had come of it for me and I did not understand what was wrong with it and what I had to do to it.

I thought about re-doing the novel for some time, what to correct in it, I even formulated various doubtless forthcoming explanations on this account that were more or less coherent, in any case more coherent than in the article, a chain of critical observations which I had to think about, but in fact I could not think about it any more. Having firmly decided and given my word not to look at the novel for at least five years, not to be tormented by it, I wrote to the publishing house where it was going to come out and requested that the agreement with me be broken off, as I would not be printing "Smoke of the Fatherland."

Some time after my discussion with Zhdanov, his aide Kuznetsov invited me in and asked me how matters stood with the play with whose materials I had become acquainted in the spring after our meeting with Comrade Stalin. Did I need any help aside from what I had already been given when I was acquainted with the materials?

Before this I had been so stunned by all that had gone on with "Smoke of the Fatherland" and Fadeyev's "Young Guard"—this was also quite an upheaval for me—that it had not occurred to me to link my "Smoke of the Fatherland" that had been printed and the play I had not written. Only then, sitting in Kuznetsov's office, did I understand that there was such a link, that aside from everything else they had not expected a novel from me at all, but the play whose writing was chalked up to me from the very day we were with Stalin. My mood after "Smoke of the Fatherland" was repulsive, severe—worse things didn't happen, while in these cases—I knew this already for myself—there was only one thing that could right the scales and put me on my feet—that work, and the sooner the better. And suddenly, without reflecting for a minute, I said to Kuznetsov that I would write the play, that I would be sitting down to it in the upcoming days and that I needed help, I needed a serious consultant, a major scientist who could put me onto the course of some microbiological problems that were connected with the action in the play.

In short, the next day I was visiting the minister of health care, Yefim Ivanovich Smirnov, and two days later I met Academician Zdrodovskiy, who became my consultant in working on the play "Alien Shadow."

Academician of Medical Sciences and Professor Pavel Feliksovich Zdrodovskiy was one of the leading microbiologists of the older generation. Among his credits to science and the people was the development of a vaccine against typhoid fever, the application of which played a large role during the Great Patriotic War and afterward. Zdrodovskiy naturally had not the slightest responsibility for the play I was writing, it was all the author's, who had no concept in relation to it. The subject I consulted with him on was of a completely new type. By the design

I had, as soon as I started thinking about the play, its main hero—a subjectively absolutely honest person but also ambitious and inclined to impart no small significance to publicizing his own scientific achievements abroad—was working on a microbiological problem that was like a double-edged sword: on the one hand, it should lead to a most humanitarian result that he had in mind, while on the other, it could also be used for dangerous and misanthropic purposes. And it was namely that, in providing data on his discoveries overseas, that he did not reckon with. The possibility of such a use for his discovery simply did not occur to him.

This idea was entirely speculative, and it was not born of any knowledge or understanding of any problems of microbiology whatsoever, but simply from the fact that I wanted to write a play not about a scoundrel and a traitor, but of a subjectively honest person who was under the influence of all that taken together we then called groveling to foreigners that unexpectedly put one in the position of potential traitor to the interests of one's own country. That was how the speculative concept looked. Setting it forth to Zdrodovskiy, I began trying it out with him, whether in microbiology, in some sector of it, such a course of research on a problem could take shape in practice in which various aspects of solving it could bring both results promising to mankind and ominous results as well.

After several days of reflection and two or three discussions, Zdrodovskiy suggested to me from a purely academic viewpoint a really possible basis on which I could base my play in principle. The discussion concerned two stages of research work on a safe vaccine for such almost untreatable diseases as, say, the plague. At the first stage of research, the development of such a strength of preparation that would concentrate all the might of the disease, that would, so to speak, produce it in geometric progression. And only at the next, second stage, based on this murderous power of the preparation, its reverse weakening, also in geometric progression, as a result of the vaccine brought into production and protecting against an illness, say, the plague. If the first part of the research were singled out from the second, a technique for creating the peak effect of the preparation from the technique of subsequently weakening it and its multiple transformation into a vaccine, then the data obtained as a result of the first stage could in principle be used by people who were concerned not with creating a vaccine, but with creating weapons for biological warfare. Here, strictly speaking, was the whole theoretical footing for the conflict that could arise in the play and that interested me.

Having elaborated on this purely theoretical aspect of the matter, I went several weeks later to Saratov, to a microbiological institute that had long been engaged in work on creating and perfecting vaccines against tularaemia and the plague. I didn't go there to discuss the problems that I intended to pose in the play, but rather so as to imagine a little better the world of the people and

the academic institutional climate in which the action of my projected play would take place. Taking into account the theme, naturally, I did not think of seeking any prototypes or supplying observations directly for the play. I simply wanted to feel the atmosphere of roughly the same sort of scientific institution that would be discussed in the play.

The trip proved interesting. I met several excellent people there, and true stories of the sometimes dangerous and dramatic features of their work could have been the basis for a realistic play on our real people of science rather than for the foolish and for me grievously memorable composition that I ended up writing at the beginning of 1948 called "Alien Shadow." I wrote it without bad intentions, I wrote it torturously, under coercion, forcing myself to believe in the necessity of what I was doing. And I was especially tormented by the fact that the grain of truth that had truly been present in the words of Stalin about the necessity of destroying a spirit of self-diminishment in oneself was already wholly present in the novel "Smoke of the Fatherland," which I had written willingly, from the heart, perhaps somehow not skillfully, but absolutely sincere and unfettered. In "Alien Shadow" this grain of truth was dragged in by me artificially, surrounded with artificially contrived circumstances and as a result so covered with weeds that I can now only with great effort force myself to reread this conjectured play, shameful to me as a writer, which I should not have written then for anything, despite what could have been. And ultimately I could have not written it, I could have had enough character to resist this self-violation. Now, thirty years and more later, I am ashamed that I did not have enough. I am in no way ashamed that I wrote the poem "Comrade Stalin, Do You Hear Us?" in 1941, because it was a cry of the heart, a cry of the heart of a man, at the time in one way sighted and another way blind, if we are speaking of the object of the poem, but a cry of the soul nonetheless. And I in no way regret the self-torment of the times that was connected with it. That is how it had to be for me.

In order not to return to this unhappy topic for me of "Alien Shadow," jumping ahead somewhat, I will tell a subsequent tragicomic story here.

Having written this play in the spring of 1948, I did something I had never done before or since. Without submitting it to either the press or the theaters, I sent a copy of the play to Zhdanov and wrote a short note to Stalin's aide Poskrebyshev that I had finished the play, the possibility of writing which has been discussed in May the year before during the writers' meeting with Stalin, and had sent a copy to Zhdanov.

I acted thus, in spite of my custom of never sending anything anywhere, because after my conversation with Kuznetsov I knew that the writing of my play was perceived as the fulfillment of a commission or assignment that I had taken on—I don't know how to say it better than that, what would be closer to my terminology

of thought—and, accordingly, that which I had done should be presented for a reading where they had made me do it. That was the logic of this deed that differed from my customary logic—taking it to the editor. Where else?

The play was sent to Zhdanov in either April or May of 1948. I heard nothing of it for eight months. I did not remind them of it, I didn't want to and didn't think it was possible. Zhdanov fell ill and then died. I stopped thinking about the play, I had cut off everything connected with it in my memory much earlier, as early as the summer. All of the time that I had remaining that was free from work at the Writers' Union and at NOVYY MIR was occupied with a new book of poetry, "Friends and Enemies," which I was writing with almost the same enthusiasm as "Smoke of the Fatherland." The further away it was, the stronger the feeling that I had seemingly stepped over this play. Stepped directly from "Smoke of the Fatherland" to the book of verse, and the hell with them and this "Alien Shadow."

But one day in January of 1949, when I was at work at NOVYY MIR, an aide to the editor of IZVESTIYA came by unexpectedly—NOVYY MIR was at the time located in an outbuilding adjoining the editors of IZVESTIYA—and said that Poskrebyshv had called him at the editorial offices and relayed that I should call Stalin. Here was the number I should call. I was about to take the phone, but considering that this number was a rotary, which I did not have at NOVYY MIR, I went to IZVESTIYA. The editors of IZVESTIYA were either not in the office or had left out of delicacy—I was one-on-one with the rotary phone. I lifted the receiver and dialed the number—I don't remember now what Stalin said: "Stalin here" or "Hello," one of the two. I greeted him and said that it was Simonov calling.

I recorded the following conversation with one omission, which I will fill in, upon returning to the editorial offices of NOVYY MIR. I wrote it down, I think, absolutely accurately. More precisely, it was not a conversation, but simply what Stalin thought it necessary to report to me, having read "Alien Shadow." Here is the record:

"I have read your play 'Alien Shadow.' In my opinion, it is a good play, but there is one question which is illuminated incorrectly and which must be resolved and corrected. Trubnikov feels that the laboratory is his personal property. This is an incorrect viewpoint. The workers of the laboratory feel that the laboratory is their property by right of the labor they have performed there. This is also an incorrect point of view. The laboratory is the property of the people and the government. And the government takes no part whatsoever in your play, only the scientific workers are active. And after all the issue is a secret of great state importance. I think that after Makeyev goes to Moscow, after the careerist Okunev commits suicide, the government cannot help but intervene in this issue, and it doesn't intervene in your's. This is incorrect. In my opinion, the ending must be made

such that Makeyev, having come from Moscow to the laboratory and speaking with Trubnikov in the presence of everyone, said what had happened at the minister of health's office, that the minister had reported on the issue to the government and the government had obliged him, despite all of Trubnikov's errors, to keep Trubnikov in the laboratory, and obliged him to transmit to Trubnikov that the government, despite everything he had done, had no doubt of his decency and had no doubt of his ability to bring the business he had begun to a close. You must correct it this way, I think. How that is done in practice, you know yourself. When it is corrected, the play must be released."

After this, I recall, there was an unrecorded "Goodbye" and the conversation ended.

I made the omission at the beginning of this record out of considerations of tact. Anything could happen to the record of this conversation, I might have to show it to someone suddenly, although I did not intend to do so in principle, but it could happen. And at the beginning of the conversation Stalin, having said that he had read my play, added in quite annoyed fashion: "I only received it and read it yesterday, they didn't tell me for half a year that they had it there, and in general..." Here he stopped, evidently having decided not to continue on this topic, returning to the discussion of the play itself that I have recorded.

I thought then and think now that Zhdanov, either for some reasons known to him or circumstances that had taken shape that were not known to me—and the circumstances in the last months of his life were, it seems, complex—did not speak or had no occasion to speak to Stalin about the fact that he had received my play for reading or did not consider it necessary to do so. It must be assumed that the play reached Stalin after they reported to him on the archives remaining after the death of Zhdanov and had presented an inventory of those archives. And there was irritation in the words I had heard on the phone—I don't know, at the fact that the late Zhdanov, perhaps, or at Poskrebyshv, who had known about my play, but had also not felt it necessary to tell him that I had sent it.

I cited this unrecorded part of the conversation because there are also some elements of Stalin's personality in it—in his irritation at the fact that they had not reported something immediately to him in which he had a direct interest, and in his words, "I received it and read it yesterday." Having immediately recorded the content of the conversation and reread it two or three times, I understood, first of all, that it contained not simply an opinion of the play, but an almost textual program for reworking its finale and, second, I was to do this without delay.

It must be said that in the face of such strictness in the postulation of the question of groveling and servility to foreigners that existed at the time, I myself would not



have chosen to end the play with what Stalin proposed. It ended differently in my version, much worse for the hero of the play, Professor Trubnikov, who, in his ambition united with trustfulness, had almost made a scientific secret of state importance the property of those who should not know it. A sword of Damocles hung over him at the end of the play, and it remained unknown how it would all end for him. Stalin's suggestion evidently reflected some mood that formed in him at the time, in saying "government," that he in the third person understood as himself and thus extended to Trubnikov that soft decision full of trust that, it would seem, would have been difficult to expect of Stalin, the more so in regard to this problem.

Speaking candidly, this turn of events at the end of the play suited me. Once Stalin himself forgave Trubnikov at the end of the play for what he was talking about, when matters concerned real life, with such intolerance, I was ready to change for the better the fate of my hero. It even seemed to me that behind this suggestion of Stalin and behind this conversation with him there was an impending easing of the extremes on the issue considered in the play. Extremes that went further, the more the conscience of many people of our generation, including my own, were troubled.

Alas, I received visible testimony that this was not so almost in the same days. I will relate all of this later, but now about the tragicomic accord that ended the story of my play "Alien Shadow."

I made the corrections that came from Stalin in the play's finale, which corrections, I repeat, suited me, making them over literally one day, and the play was printed in the first, January issue of the journal ZNAMYA, after which it was advanced, along with other plays, I don't remember by whom—a commission on drama or a journal—for a Stalin Prize. Being away, I did not know this and came directly to the secretariat of the Writers' Union, at which they had discussed the works advanced by this or that literary organization for a Stalin Prize in advance, before the beginning of the committee session on Stalin prizes.

I saw the name of my play among the other things advanced. It was not for me to say anything on this theme. I later sometimes screwed up my determination and spoke, as it was, say, with the novel "Comrades in Arms," when I requested that the novel be dropped from discussion. But in this instance, under the extant circumstances, I could not speak for the play or against it, I could only remain silent. And meanwhile, some of my colleagues present at the secretariat had come out quite sharply not so much against the play overall as against its incorrect, too soft and too liberal, in someone's expression, even a little capitulative, ending. Some said that Trubnikov should be punished without fail in the eyes of the audience; others suggested doing what I had done in the beginning—having the Damocles sword of future retribution hanging over him at the end. But the speakers

were completely against the fact that the government pardoned him and felt that such an ending made it impossible to advance it for a Stalin Prize. I sat and was silent, feeling the whole stupidity of my own and someone else's position. I had not yet spoken with anyone about my conversation on the phone with Stalin about the play, feeling awkward in referring to it and even not seeing my right to do so. At the journal and the theater where I sent the play for production, I said only that if any obstacles were to arise, let them turn to the Central Committee and act according to what was said there. But no obstacles arose, and no one had to appeal to the Central Committee. A difficult moment arose only at that moment at the secretariat. Difficult and even, calling things by their true names, quite stupid. I sat and listened in silence as my colleagues castigated the liberalism of Stalin that was manifest in the ending of my play. They obviously were waiting for my objections, but they did not follow. Surprised by my silence, Fadeyev even asked me, "Well, what do you say?" I said that insofar as the discussion concerned my play, I should probably not say anything and I would not be saying anything.

That is where the affair concluded. At that stage of the secretariat of the Writers' Union, the play was removed from discussion. But there were other stages ahead, and it was up to Fadeyev to be further engaged with this as chairman of the Committee on Stalin Prizes. It would be incorrect and ugly on my part not to relate confidentially to him alone, face to face, at least the paradoxicality of the extant situation. On that same day, after several hours, catching him alone, I did so. His first reaction was unrestrained laughter, he laughed long and modulating and at once afterward, without the slightest pause, became quite serious.

"Why didn't you tell us ahead of time, why did you put us all in such a stupid situation?"

I answered quite reasonably that, first of all, Stalin had not asked me to relate the telephone conversation and that the play's ending had been reworked the way he suggested, in some replies even textually precisely; second, to disseminate this and even hint at it seemed to me ugly on my part and even improper; third, from where would I know in advance that some heads would nod immediately in the direction of this ending? I had in no way expected this, quite the opposite, I liked it myself, and it seemed to me that others would like it as well.

"Yes, you have put us in a puddle," laughed Fadeyev again and again, and becoming serious all at once, said, "You'll have to tell me about these things some other time. And I, in turn, will tell you."

And that is how our conversation that day ended with Fadeyev, either laughing or angry at me in turns.

"Alien Shadow" was produced by the MKhAT [Moscow Academic Art Theater of the USSR imeni M. Gorky] in Moscow and the Bolshoy Drama Theater in Leningrad. Despite all of the negative aspects of the play—its coarse linearity, false pathos, phony notes in discussions of science and groveling in certain places and a series of psychologically strained interpretations in others, Livanov and Bolduman, through the power of their exceptional actors' gifts, somehow dragged the roles out, played them, which had been made almost impossible. The same could also be said of Politseymako at the Bolshoy Drama Theater.

The play and the performances were highly praised in the press, it was awarded the Stalin Prize, but all of this among the other difficult events that took place in 1949 was for me somehow joyless or almost joyless.

But now, concluding this story, I return to roughly a year earlier, March 31 of 1948, when a second meeting with Stalin took place that was not completely recorded, it had omissions, but recorded nonetheless. Before citing these records, however, a few words about another session at which I was present. This was a session in June of 1947, two weeks after Stalin received us on the literary issues. I no longer have records of that session, apparently because it transpired soon after Stalin's conversation with us and nothing substantive was added to that discussion. As I recall it today, almost nothing was said of literature at this session, or in any case nothing that was said is remembered. The session was more official, more people were there, it was perhaps shorter than all the others I have been at. They discussed simultaneously prizes for science and technology and prizes for literature and art at this session. Later they were always discussed separately. The speaker from the Central Committee in literature and art was Zhdanov, while for science and technology it was Voznesenskiy.

One of the recollections I associate with this session is namely about Voznesenskiy. It would be incorrect for me to say that I liked this person, whom I was seeing for the first time, he weighed on my soul, as they say. It was something else: I am reminded of him not because I liked him, but because something surprised me, apparently the fact that he spoke so abruptly and easily, with what firmness he explained, in answering Stalin's questions, various changes that had been made for this or that reason in the initial decisions of the prize committee for this or that reason in the realm of science and technology, how he several times insisted on his own point of view—decisively and abruptly. In short, there was a certain dissonance in the tonalities of what was said by others in the way he conducted himself—and this I remembered.

As for literature and art, I remember a story that is outwardly completely humorous, but, if it can be expressed thus, double-edged, feathered on two sides with a certain cynicism. The film "Admiral Nakhimov" was being discussed. When Zhdanov, as chairman of the

commission, reported on the awarding of a first prize to that film and enumerated all those who were proposed to receive prizes for the film, Stalin asked him if that was all for that film. I admit he may have asked already knowing that it was not all, and amused in advance for what was to come.

"No, that is not all," said Zhdanov.

"What?"

"Here is a letter, Comrade Stalin."

"From whom?"

Zhdanov gave the name of a very well known and very good actor.

"What does he write?"

He writes, said Zhdanov, that it would quite not be politically correct if he were not included among the actors receiving prizes for this film, since he played the role of the Turkish pasha, our chief adversary, and if he didn't get a prize, it meant that it looked like an incorrect evaluation of the role of our adversary in the film, a distortion of the balance of forces.

I can't vouch for the exact words, but Zhdanov's letter expounded something of the sort.

Stalin laughed and, continuing to laugh, asked, "He wants to get a prize, Comrade Zhdanov?"

"He does, Comrade Stalin."

"Very much?"

"Very much."

"He asks very much?"

"He does."

"Well if he wants it, if he asks for it, a person must get a prize," said Stalin, all the while continuing to laugh. And suddenly becoming serious, he added, "And your actor who played the sailor Koshka, didn't he ask for a prize?"

"He did not, Comrade Stalin."

"But he acted very well also, he just didn't ask. A person doesn't ask, but we'll give him one, what do you think?"

With the exception of the request that was repeated by Zhdanov, I remember the rest word for word and am ready to vouch for the accuracy of what was said, but I have no desire to comment on it here.

Perhaps, since I mentioned Voznesenskiy here, who, as is well known, perished a little over two years later—for no reason at all in the so-called Leningrad affair—I should cite a recollection about Voznesenskiy here, not my own.

Thirty years after that session, at which the behavior of Voznesenskiy attracted my attention, one of his ministers at the time—Ivan Vladimirovich Kovalev, with whom I was in the hospital between stunted and recently planted saplings—recalled how, as minister of railroad transport and accompanying Stalin on one of his first postwar trips, about the same years which I am talking about, heard from Stalin some approving words about Voznesenskiy: "That Voznesenskiy, he is different from the others chiefs in a positive way,"—as Kovalev explained it to me, Stalin sometimes used the word "chiefs" ironically for the members of the Politburo heading up the activity of several ministries under their departments—"the other chiefs, if they have disagreements among themselves, at first try to resolve the disagreements among themselves and then report for my information in coordinated form. Even if some of them do not agree with each other, all the same they coordinate on paper and reach consent. But Voznesenskiy, if he does not agree, will not give his consent on paper. He comes to me with his objections, his differences of opinion. They understand that I cannot know everything, and they want to make a rubber stamp of me. I cannot know all of this. I address the differences, the objections, investigating why they arose and what is going on. And they hide this from me. They vote and hide in order to make me a rubber stamp. They are going about making a rubber stamp of me. That is why I prefer the objections of Voznesenskiy to their coordination."

Thus, in the recollections of Kovalev, Stalin was speaking then, some time a year or two before destroying him, about Voznesenskiy and his work style that Stalin liked at the time.

It was terrible to hear this thirty years later.

And now the meeting that I recorded on April 1, 1948, the day after it took place. Here is the record with some commentary I made at the time, while all of the additions that seem essential to me today I will also make after I cite the whole record of the time with the comments of the time. Here is the record:

I want to record the basics of what was said on issues of literature in connection with yesterday's, March 31, 1948, discussion of Stalin prizes while it is still fresh.

Fadeyev and the editors of the "fat" journals were summoned to Stalin this time—Panferov, Vishnevskiy, me and Druzin. In the course of discussing things to put forward for the prizes, Stalin started talking about the number of prizes—a formal element—and if more works worthy of prizes appeared than there were prizes, the

number of prizes could be increased as well. This was done in practice here, including through the introduction of a third category of prizes that had not existed before.

Stalin repeated his thought that formal considerations should not be decisive and then, in the course of the discussion, and as he conducted the discussion in general, a tendency was quite clearly manifested—to expand the circle of works under consideration and the circle of authors under consideration—and if there were a sufficient number of works meriting attention, the prizes should be awarded more broadly. I think the editors of all the "fat" journals were probably summoned to this session for the first time in connection with expanding this circle.

In discussing a number of things, Stalin expressed considerations that had general literary significance for us. When Erenburg's "Tempest" was discussed, one of those present (D.T. Shepilov, reporting from the Central Committee commission on prizes in the realm of literature and arts—K.S.), in explaining why the commission had proposed altering the decision of the committee and giving the novel a prize of the second rather than first category, began talking about the shortcomings of "Tempest," considering the chief shortcoming of the book to be the fact that the French were depicted in it better than the Russians.

Stalin objected, "Can that really be? Are the French really depicted in the novel better than the Russians? Is this true?"

Here he stopped, waiting for the others attending the session to speak up. The opinions of the speakers, differing with each other on different points, coincided in the majority of cases on the fact that the Russian were brought out forcefully in the novel, and when a foreign country, France, was depicted, the love of the French partisans and communists for the Soviet Union was shown along with the role of the victories of the Soviet Union in the consciousness of these people and in their work, and the active role of Russian Soviet people who had fallen into the ranks of the French Resistance under the conditions of battle with the fascists was shown in the form of Medved. Waiting for everyone to speak, Stalin supported these considerations in general, saying, "No, in my opinion, it would also be incorrect to say that the French are depicted in Erenburg's novel more powerfully than the Russians," and then, after a silence, added thoughtfully, "Maybe Erenburg knows France better, that could be. He has his shortcomings, of course, he writes unevenly, sometimes hurries, but 'Tempest' is a great work. And people, the people he shows are average ones. There are writers who do not show great people, they show average, rank-and-file people. Erenburg is one of those." Stalin fell silent once again and again added, "He has shown well in the novel how people with shortcomings, little people, sometimes even nasty people, find themselves in the course of war, are changed, become different. And it is good that this is shown."



There is now a blank in my record and the heading "A Few Comments." I cite them here, reminding you once again that they are notes from the time:

This was not quite openly stated, but personally I had a feeling of two different understandings of Erenburg's shortcomings that were revealed in the discussion. In the speech of those who spoke first in the discussion of the novel, criticism that had already been sounded in the press was reflected. Pointing out the shortcomings of Erenburg's novel in its depiction of Soviet people, it listed toward the aesthetic and moral-psychological. It was said that these people were depicted worse, more weakly than the French, first of all from the point of view of how they are shown and second, from the point of view of their inner subtleties, psychological nuances, niceties and the like. It was namely from that point of view that the criticism came to the conclusion that the French were depicted more powerfully in Erenburg's novel, and the Russians more weakly.

Stalin (at least as I understood him) approached this issue from another, chief aspect—that Soviet people were shown in the novel more powerfully than the French in the literal sense of the word. They were stronger, on their side was the power of the order that stands behind us, the power of their morals, the force of will, the force of conviction, the force of truth, the force of their Soviet upbringing. From all these points of view, they were stronger than the French in the novel. And notwithstanding all of the shortcomings of "Tempest," and all these shortcomings were formulated absolutely precisely by a simple observation—"Maybe he knows France better," made with emphasis on the word "knows"—they, these shortcomings, do not outweigh the positive impact of the concept of "stronger" in the literal sense of the word.

This concludes my commentary at the time, and my record of what transpired at the meeting continues:

With regard to Erenburg and speaking about writers who depicted run-of-the-mill people, Stalin recalled Gorky. He recalled him in general and the novel "Mother" in particular: "Take Gorky's 'Mother.' There is not one major person in it, all are run-of-the-mill people."

An even more detailed discussion than about "Tempest" arose when they began discussing Vera Panova's novel "Kruzhilikhha." Fadeyev, in explaining the reasons for which the Committee on Stalin Prizes had rejected this novel, initially advanced for a prize, began speaking of the objectivism in depicting the active personalities that was characteristic of the author and that this objectivism was subjected to criticism in the press.

Vishnevskiy, defending the novel, spoke for a long time, saying that the criticism had simply set upon this work, that's all they did, tear it apart.

"In my opinion, they also praised it!" objected Stalin. "I read positive articles as well."

(I'll say in parentheses that on all questions of literature, even the most inconsequential, Stalin displayed a familiarity quite staggering to me.)

"What is that—bad?" asked Stalin, objecting to Vishnevskiy and asking Fadeyev. "An objectivist approach?"

Fadeyev said that an objectivist approach was in his opinion undoubtedly bad.

"So tell me," asked Stalin, "take 'The Town of Okurov', how do you evaluate it?"

Fadeyev said that Gorky and his subjectivist views stood behind everything that happened in "The Town of Okurov." And it was clear in general, where his sympathies lie... and his antipathies.

"But," said Fadeyev, "it seems to me personally that in this work, too much is depicted in too-black tones and the author's tendency of Gorky and his subjectivist view were not everywhere detected."

Hearing this, Stalin asked, "Well, how about in the 'Artomonov Affair'? Whose side was Gorky on there? Is it clear to you?"

Fadeyev said that it was clear to him on whose side Gorky was.

Stalin spread his hands a little to the side, laughed and half repeated, half asked, addressing all and no one in particular, "Clear?" and before returning to the discussion of "Kruzhilikhha," made an indefinite derisive gesture which seemed to me to mean "And to me, for example, it's not so clear on whose side Gorky is in 'The Artomonov Affair.'"

Someone of those present began criticizing "Kruzhilikhha" for the fact that Uzdechkin was portrayed in it as chairman of a factory committee.

"Well, so what," said Stalin. "There are still Uzdechkinites among us."

Zhdanov answered that Uzdechkin was one of those in whom the discord between being and consciousness was especially clear.

"One of many and many more," said Stalin. "Everybody is criticizing Panova for the fact that the people in her novel have no unity between the personal and the public and are criticizing that conflict. Is it resolved so simply in life, so simply combined? It happens that they are not combined." Stalin fell silent and then, putting an end to the dispute about "Kruzhilikhha," said about Panova, "Her people are truthfully depicted."

The discussion moved on to other works. Suddenly, in the course of that discussion, Stalin asked, "And the latest stories of Polevoy—how are they, in your opinion?"

He was answered that the stories of Polevoy were not bad, but considerably weaker than his "Story of a Real Man."

"Yes, listen," said Stalin, "what is this? Why is there a 'literary editor Lukina' under this story? Editors should edit the manuscripts of authors... That is their obligation. Why have a special 'literary editor Lukina'?"

Panferov started explaining in answer to this that all publications of a book type always put down who the editor is. When something is printed in a journal, who edited it is usually not put down, and if its literary editor is indicated in publication, that this had a special sense, as a form of gratitude for a lot of editorial work.

Stalin did not agree.

"Every journal has editors. If an author has great shortcomings and if he is young, the editors are obliged to help him, obliged to edit his works. That is their obligation," Stalin emphasized rigidly, "why these words 'literary editor'? Here, for example, in the third issue of ZNAMYA it is printed: 'Notes of Pokryshkin with the participation of Denisov.' Also literary editorship of Denisov and gratitude for assistance to Denisov."

Vishnevskiy started to explain to Stalin how the book was born, that Pokryshkin wanted to relate episodes from his life, but Colonel Denisov had written the whole book from beginning to end, and they together selected the most delicate form: Pokryshkin thanks Denisov for assistance.

"If Denisov wrote it," said Stalin, "then let it be written: Denisov on Pokryshkin. Or else many writers will appear among us."

March 10, 1979

We spoke for a long time and in detail on this theme. And the general sense of where Stalin was leading this conversation and the sense of the replies that he gave in the course of the discussion, as far as I can remember, consisted of the following. Editing, even the largest and most profound, is the business of editors, a public matter, for which there are no grounds to demand special gratitude, honor and publicity. As for the things that one person writes and another signs, as well as any other "rescue" forms such as "literary editing" or "literary record," gratitude for assistance and the rest—all of this aroused categorical rejection in Stalin. It was a complex issue, and we had to think about it, of course, since there were undoubtedly ways out of it—both those such as co-authorship and those such as an honest foreword describing the method of work. Finally, also possible is

such a form as "a book by so-and-so about so-and-so written according to his own stories," wherein in this case the foreword could belong either to whomever wrote the book or to whom the oral stories that make up the basis for it belonged.

After the discussion associated with the Polevoy stories, the talk touched on the book "Sons" by Vasilii Smirnov. Fadeyev described it and explained that it had been rejected at the committee in connection with its now not especially topical theme that depicted a village at the turn of the century.

Stalin said thoughtfully, "Yes, he writes well, an able man," then was silent for a while and added half inquiringly and half assertively, "But do we need this book today?"

Panferov started talking about the books of Babayevskiy and Semushkin, insisting that they could be included in the list of prize-winning works, making an exception, giving prizes only to the first parts of the novels and thus encouraging young authors.

Stalin did not agree. "A young author," he said. "What does that mean? Why such reasoning? The question is, how is the book—is it a good book? What of it—a young author?"

These words of his were not a negative evaluation of the books cited by Panferov. On the contrary, these books were well received by him overall. His remark—what does young author mean?—was of a fundamental nature in this instance.

That is what I wrote at the time, including considerations that arose after the session and before the records were made.

And now a few additions connected with that session which I, for understandable reasons, could not write down at the time, and some of my recollections and reflections from today as well.

The first addition is connected with the fact that Stalin had a habit—I saw this at several sessions, not only the one I am writing about now—of taking a small bundle of books and journals with him to the sessions. He put it at his left hand, and what was in there remained unknown for the time being, but this bundle not only aroused the interest of those present, but even elicited a certain alarm—what could be in there? They were literary works that had come out as books and were printed in journals that were not on any lists offered for prizes by the committee. That which was discussed, or more precisely, could be discussed at the session in connection with the offerings of the Committee on Stalin Prizes, Stalin, as a rule, had read. I cannot confirm that he always read them all. I can allow that he did not read some works, although I do not remember it directly even once. Everything that came into the field of general view at the sessions,

including those for which there were differences in the Writers' Union, on the committee or in the Central Committee—give a prize, don't give one, move it from the first category to the second or vice versa—all that was to some extent disputatious and elicited differences, he had read. And I was sure of that every time I was present at these sessions.

When the idea came to him of awarding prizes beyond what had been offered, in such cases he did not reckon very much with the status of the prizes, he could advance a book that had come out two years ago, as was done in my absence with my book "Days and Nights," which had even been printed four years earlier, and as happened in my presence, in 1948. At the time I was sitting with the editor of ZVEZDA, Druzin, sitting quite far from Stalin, at the end of the table. We had already covered poetry, prose and drama, when suddenly Stalin, pulling some journal from the bundle lying to his left, folded over, apparently opened up to a page that interested him, asked those present, "Who has read the play 'The Crow's Stone' by Gruzdev and Chetverikov?"

All were silent, none of us had read the play.

"It was printed in 1944 in the journal ZVEZDA," said Stalin. "I think it is a good play. No one paid attention to it at the time, but I think we should give a prize to comrades Gruzdev and Chetverikov for this good play. What are your opinions?"

In the spirit that accompanied these discussions at the Politburo, Stalin's question "What are your opinions?" did not assume that there could not be other opinions, but in the given instance they were not offered since it became clear that no one other than he himself had read the play.

A pause followed. During that time Druzin, feverishly nudging me with his elbow, whispered in my ear, "What can we do? We printed it in ZVEZDA, but Chetverikov has been arrested and is in jail. Do we speak up or stay silent?"

"Speak up, of course," I whispered to Druzin in answer, thinking to myself that if Druzin were to speak, Stalin might release the author of a play he liked. What would it cost him to do that? And if Druzin remained silent now, things could cost him dearly afterward—the fact that he had known and not spoken up.

"It remains to be decided what prize to give for the play, what category," said Stalin impatiently after the pause. "I think..."

Here Druzin, having resolved, finally, resolved, blurted out in despair, very loudly, "He is in jail, Comrade Stalin."

"Who is in jail?" Stalin did not understand:

"One of the authors of the play, Chetverikov, is in jail, Comrade Stalin."

Stalin was silent, turned the journal in his hands, closed it and put it back, continuing to be silent. It seemed that he vacillated for a few seconds on how to act and, having resolved it for himself differently than I had hoped, looked at the list of prizes and said, "We'll go on to literary criticism. For the book 'Glinka'..."

After the criticism we went on to cinema, and here I well remember that I experienced a certain vindictive pleasure that among the other films, a prize was given to the film "The Russian Question," to which I had a relation only as the author of the primary source of the screenplay—the play. All the rest was done by Mikhail Ilich Romm, he was not only a director, but an author of screenplays as well, for which I wrote just a few sentences in all that seemed to Romm essential for the last monologue of the hero Smith. I had received a prize for "The Russian Question" a year earlier and naturally did not figure among those being awarded today. This is the reason that the vindictive pleasure arose for me. As early as in the last years of the war an artistic council independent of the cinematographic leadership had been created. It included various famous figures in the arts, literature, journalism and philosophy and was chaired by Leonid Fedorovich Ilichev, a man to whose mind and extraordinary abilities I gave their due, but I had a firm and monotonous dislike for him in all of the positions that he held at various times. I did not like him for the methods of using his mind and abilities that he selected in various conflicts.

I had not been at the artistic council since nearly the first postwar summer—either two or three years—but I was there when they were discussing "The Russian Question." The nature of this discussion, after a long recess, struck me both in form and in substance. In form in the tone set by the chairman, it was bilious and coarse, and in substance as what was demanded of Romm was not in the play "The Russian Question": relations with America over the time the picture was being made had worsened strongly, become more harsh, and they wanted Romm mechanically to transfer this new situation of sharply worsened relations into the film, the action of which, like the play, took place right after the end of the war in the atmosphere that existed at the time, and not the one that had taken shape by 1948. They were essentially demanding of him that he make a different film, this one was not recommended for release to the screen, and all of this was moreover accompanied by rude statements addressed to the actors and the actresses—and it should be added that the leading role in "The Russian Question" was played by the wife of Romm, the outstanding actress Kuzmina—which aggravated the rudeness of the statements.

There, at the artistic council, I did not agree either with the reproaches directed toward Romm or their form. And on the score of the form, I said in conclusion that I



did not recognize the artistic council. Evidently, during the time I was not at its sessions, they had been able to grow accustomed to rudeness and even boorishness which did not adorn our meeting. Roughly so. Some of my colleagues felt insulted and at the next meeting of the artistic council resolved to condemn my inadmissible behavior.

That is why the conferring of a first-category Stalin Prize upon Romm for his film was associated for me with a certain share of vindictive personal pleasure or, if you wish, satisfaction. On a fundamental plane, which was, of course, much more important, it provided, it seemed to me at the time, some basis for fighting the super-opportunists to whom we had had to subordinate ourselves in connection with these or those social changes and trends and practically every year cross out and write anew works written earlier.

I recall all of this generally not-so-significant story, relating to me and to Romm, because it is exceedingly typical of those situations, very difficult in many relations, when matters did not always conclude the same way they did with Romm, sometimes just the opposite to the great, and sometimes just plain shameful, detriment of our art and our literature.

The discussion of prizes had already concluded, but Stalin, by the end of the discussion seated at the table, did not rise from the table, it looked like he intended to say something to us that he had saved for the end of the meeting. We were generally waiting for this, because a question still remained unanswered. The list of prizes for poetry had opened with the book by Nikolay Semenovitch Tikhonov, "Yugoslavian Notebook," a book in which there were many good poems. Much had been written about "Yugoslavian Notebook" and it had been offered unanimously for a prize. It was as if this prize had been erased from a blackboard, the discussion proceeded as if no one had advanced this book, as if it did not exist in nature. This meant that something extraordinary had occurred. But what? I and my other comrades did not pose questions in this regard, thinking that if we asked in that situation, it should be done by Fadeyev as the senior among us and a member of the Central Committee. But Fadeyev also did not pose any questions about Tikhonov's "Yugoslavian Notebook" or felt that it was not possible to do so, or knew something that we did not that he did not feel it was necessary or proper to share with us.

Having sat several seconds in silence, Stalin, turning not to us, as he usually did, but to the members of the Politburo sitting at the table, said, "I think that we must nevertheless explain to our comrades why we have removed the question of Comrade Tikhonov's book 'Yugoslavian Notebook' from discussion. I think they must know, and they and Comrade Tikhonov should not have any perplexity."

In answer to this half-question and half-assertion, someone said that yes, of course, it must be explained. They generally agreed with Stalin.

I should note in connection with this that, as it seemed to me, in those cases where some question had been talked over by Stalin with a member of the Politburo or some of them ahead of time, Stalin did not neglect the opportunity of emphasizing that he was expressing a general opinion and not just his own. It is another question how much this was intentional and how much it was natural, what came from habit and what from ancient skill, what was from a spontaneous desire to make a certain impression on those representatives of the intelligentsia that were with Stalin at these sessions.

"The point is," said Stalin, "that Comrade Tikhonov is not the issue here, we have no pretensions toward him for his verse, but we cannot give him a prize for it, because Tito has been behaving badly recently."

Stalin rose and walked back and forth. Walked back and forth and repeated, "Behaving badly. Very badly."

Then Stalin went on, either searching for a formulation specially for us or weighing once again whether to use what he had ready: "I would say, behaving in a hostile manner," concluded Stalin and once again approached the table. "We do not have any grudge against Comrade Tikhonov and we will give him a prize next year for his new work. But it must be explained to him why we are not doing it now so that he is not confused. Which of you will do it?"

I volunteered to do it. The meeting ended about there. There were no more detailed discussions associated with Tito, Stalin felt it unnecessary.

I ask myself the question now: why did I volunteer to go to Tikhonov and tell him what had happened with his "Yugoslavian Notebook"? Perhaps, aside from friendship with Tikhonov and a desire to take upon myself in a friendly manner this unpleasant conversation, the fact that I, perhaps more sharply than my colleagues, felt some growing trouble in our relations with Tito may also have played a role.

In the fall of 1947, as the head of a small delegation that included one of the secretaries of the Komsomol Central Committee, Shelepin, and the head of the Moscow party office and former secretary of the party organization of the Writers' Union, Khvalebnova, I was in Yugoslavia at a congress of the Popular Front—this was the last congress at which representatives of the Soviet Union were present in those years. When we flew into Belgrade, there was no one at all from our embassy there, we were met by one of the members of the Politburo of Yugoslavia at the time, the chairman of their Gosplan, Andria Hebrang. We went straight to the congress, because we, as almost always in those years, were late or had arrived at the very start, so we didn't go by the embassy.

At the congress of the Popular Front, we sat, like the other delegations, on the stage, in the first rows of those sloping down at an angle. Sreten Zujovic, chairing the congress, conducted the session from above, behind us, the hall was in front of us, and in the wide center aisle, in two armchairs placed separately right in front of the stage, sat Tito and Rankovic over the span of several days of sessions. Directly in front of us, a few meters away, face to face.

I had not seen Tito in three years, since the fall of 1944, and he, especially right next to Rankovic dressed in a lounge suit, seemed to me to be well-groomed and brightly elegant. A certain grand bearing was characteristic of him even then, in 1944. Over these three years it had become much more noticeable, as had his concern for his outward appearance and dress.

There was also something strange in this sitting in armchairs—as if with everyone but separate from them, as if democratic, but somehow paraded. This especially struck me and caught my riveted attention on the first day; after that, on the following days—while the congress continued for three or four days—I had already become accustomed to it, because Tito was at the congress every day along with Rankovic.

At our embassy, where we went the first evening, there was a strange sort of confusion. Ambassador Lavrentyev, to whom Shelepin with his characteristic frankness told everything he thought about the fact that we had not been met and no concern had been made to inform us and promised to report this mess to Moscow, said something incomprehensible in reply. He said there was nothing in particular for him to inform us about, there was no need, he would inform Moscow of his observations and conclusions, and we would have to do the same based on our observations. He clearly did not want to go into any of the details of the situation with us, we could imagine for ourselves.

Two subsequent impressions of this trip have remained engraved in my memory.

First, the reception with Tito at some palace in the suburbs or outside the city. This reception was held in the palace itself and—thankfully, the weather was still good, it was a golden fall—in a park and an open square around the palace. Tito was unusually elegantly dressed, in some uniform that suited him exceedingly well, with rings on his fingers. He was receptive and, I would say, charming, if this charm were not somehow emphasized, conscious and skillfully exploited. He was happy with everyone, with us too, and in general we felt nothing in his exchanges with us that would have signaled the impending change in relations. But he himself was not as he had been in 1944. Different than he had been on the first November holiday in liberated Belgrade. There he

was first among his comrades, indisputably first, while here it was a meeting of a leader with the people, a meeting that demanded, if not shouts, at least whispers of admiration.

Now, in thinking about what this reminds me of, I suddenly recalled by association the last or one of the last scenes in the film "The Fall of Berlin." A scene that had been included at the suggestion of Stalin himself: Stalin, grandly played by Aleksey Dikiy, elegant, not looking like himself, among the exulting people meeting him at the airport in Berlin. Who knows why Stalin, with his mind and sense of irony, forced them to put this monstrously tasteless scene into the movie, which, by the way, had nothing in common with either historical reality, because none of this ever happened, or with his personality, since he was in the film, and in this scene did not look anything like himself? I have only one explanation: Stalin felt that the leading figure of a triumphant country—the supreme commander of its army—should remain in the memory of the people in such a medal of bronze, such a pompous victor looking nothing like himself in real life. If that is so, then behind it is an arrogance and contempt for simple people, supposedly unable to understand his role in history without this fluffy and cheap scene of apotheosis.

I recall namely this scene from "The Fall of Berlin" that struck me by association with the appearance of Tito to the people that we observed in Belgrade with a feeling of inner awkwardness and disapproval.

All three of us did not like the way that Tito conducted himself at this reception. And the way that Zujovic conducted himself in accompanying us to the airport alarmed us, or me in any case. We sat and talked with him at the airport as long as we could, drank some wine, talked some more. He was very agitated by something, he clearly did not want to let us leave. Our boarding on the plane was delayed a couple of times, and maybe even the takeoff was delayed some minutes as well. There was a feeling that this person wanted to say something to us at the last minute or at least give us to understand something. But what? Some as yet incomprehensible trouble for us was felt behind this.

Both Hebrang, in meeting us, and Zujovic, in seeing us off, were people about whom I heard later—at first much that was good, then much that was bad. But one way or another they both perished there, in Yugoslavia, in the course of the conflict that arose between Stalin and Tito. All of this, in combination with their dramatic end, was imprinted very sharply in my memory.

March 16, 1979

When I went to see Nikolay Semenovitch Tikhonov to tell him about what had happened at the session, the impending tragedy was only just taking shape, but Stalin's words about Tito, although they were completely

unexpected for me, had nonetheless fallen onto the fertile ground of my own puzzlement and feeling of trouble of some kind or, in any case, a lack of complete well-being.

Since I have touched on this topic, I must, as much for me personally, tell everything to the end, the more so as I was already convinced at the time while writing the rough draft on the theme of "Stalin Through the Eyes of My Generation" that in many cases it was indivisible from a topic that is sometimes even more difficult: "You Yourself Through Your Own Eyes Many Years Later."

Anyhow, after a session of the Cominform and the complete break in relations with Tito, I was summoned and, having become acquainted with a series of TASS materials associated with Tito's speeches and those of the chairman of United Skupshchina, Moshe Piade, they asked me to reply to these speeches with a political pamphlet and added that I should consider it a direct commission of Comrade Stalin.

Here is what can be said of the so-called political pamphlet that issued from my pen. I needed a great deal of labor to force myself to reread this composition, written with a shameful coarseness and, most importantly, false in its preconditions and its material. Molotov had then called me on account of this article. Having seated me in his office at a table for meetings and sat next to me, he showed me my article, page by page, without giving it to me. It seems that Stalin had corrected the article and entrusted Molotov, before sending it to the press, with acquainting me, the author, with these corrections. I will not repeat, I have already said what I think of this article today, it was fine without the corrections, but the corrections, quite considerable ones, further aggravated the coarseness of the article. The last paragraph, written entirely by Stalin, and the title he had thought up brought this coarseness to Herculean proportions. Asking as a formality whether I agreed with the corrections that had been made in the article, Molotov, without giving me a single page of it in my hands, kept it himself and said goodbye to me, and the next day I had the opportunity of reading it in namely that form. Everything said in that article did not embellish either my life or my journalistic path.

If we recall the feelings of the time, various feelings were tossing about within me, for example, with regard to Yugoslavian events. I believed some of the articles and documents about Yugoslavia, some I did not; there was a heaviness in my heart from what happened between us and the Yugoslavs. I well understand now the attempts to convince myself that the Yugoslavian leaders were more guilty than ours for what happened. But the greatest contradiction consisted of the fact that I remembered the Yugoslavia of 1944, I remembered the times not only of Tito, but other people as well, many and different, especially Koca Popovic, with whom I spent more than one night side by side in southern Serbia and who

became the Chief of the General Staff, after that secretary of state and, accordingly, shared the policies and positions of Tito. And I could not connect the image of Koca Popovic and all of my recollections about him with the concept of treachery. And in general, everything together did not make up a unified whole. Recalling Yugoslavia of 1944, I could not mentally combine it with what, if you believed everything that was said and written, was happening there then.

The trip of our government delegation headed by Khrushchev to Yugoslavia in 1955, the resurrection of relations and the candor with which the results of this trip were discussed at the Central Committee Plenum spoke of the extent of our responsibility—all of this not only suited me, but lifted a stone off my heart. The same year, in 1955, in preparing a speech at the Moscow city party aktiv, I decided that it would be dishonorable on my part to remain silent about my own share of responsibility. It is quite agonizing to repeat myself on these topics, and I thus cite what I said at the time:

"It was, for example, bitter for me during the years of the split with Yugoslavia that I, as a journalist, made my own contribution to the chorus, bluntly speaking, of abuse that was directed toward the leaders of Yugoslavia, to the chorus that sounded for years in the pages of our newspapers. I think that one can, of course, refer to the monstrous misinformation that the Beria-Abakumov gang criminally tried to spread, one can refer to the very authoritative documents that appeared as a result of the erroneous trust in this monstrous disinformation, but here I ask myself now—not by way of beating my own breast, no one of us needs that—but simply in human terms: one doubtless could have believed that someone in that Yugoslavia could have failed to justify the faith of the people, had proven not to be who he was felt to be, that happens in history, we know. But how could we have believed all the way in the fact that almost literally all the people who had led the Yugoslavian Party during the war years, the Communist Party, headed the government, commanded the partisan brigades, divisions and corps, that all of them had supposedly proven to be not what the people thought they were. This could not be believed, such credulity does honor to no one, and so, speaking simply in human terms, it could not be and it was not."

It remains to be added that after 1955 for a span of many years I could not find it in myself to go to Yugoslavia even when the direct necessity arose of visiting those places where I had been during my time with the partisans. I was ashamed to go there, all because of that damned article. Much of what has happened over the last decade there, in Yugoslavia, has not attracted my sympathies to Tito's personality, more likely the opposite, I always recall him more and more often in his palace with in the appearance of the leader of the people that I have already mentioned, and less and less often him singing



"Hey, commander, the machine-guns!" with the commanders of the partisan corps in 1944 on the holiday of November 7. All this is so, but that article of long ago about that man remained a lie, and I continued to be ashamed of it.

When I finally decided, seizing an opportunity—some international tourist convention that was being held in Split and to which I had been invited—to up and go to Yugoslavia anyway, I visited not only Split, but also those places that were familiar to me from the wartime; with all of the cordiality and goodwill of all the Yugoslavs I encountered, with all of the clearly expressed reluctance to recall the difficult pages of the past, a very important and troubling question remained for me: would Koca Popovic want to meet with me now? Would he want to after doubtless having read my article, if not as chief of the general staff then as secretary of state?

During the time I went to Yugoslavia, he was not really at work, but he occupied a post that was more likely exceedingly symbolic than one accompanied by any real power. I reported to him through third parties that I would like to meet with him if he had the desire to do so. He affirmed that he was prepared to meet, set a time and came by my hotel, as it turned out, so as to go out to dinner together to some favorite fish place. He was quite light, thin as before, looking very much like he did some twenty or more years earlier. In conversation with this person, who, according to my first impression, remained the same as before, and toward who I continued to feel my former sympathy, I did not evade recollections of the article that burdened me. He fell into thought, was silent for a while and then said that it was a very bad time, that you, of course, were guilty of much. "But we were also to blame," he added sadly. It seemed to me in general that he was sad. There was something in the climate that had taken shape by that time in Yugoslavia that weighed on him, something was not right or was not quite as he had dreamed in 1944, when I went around with him in a Jeep and, perhaps, the recollections of this even worsened his sadness today.

We sat together for a very long time, and then he took me back to the hotel and we parted. Everyone recognized his face—on the street, in the restaurant, in the hotel—but he conducted himself as if he did not notice it. Throwing on his raincoat, he went out to the street at a rapid pace. There was something in this person, in all of his thin lightness, in all of his Spartan ways, with his simultaneous modesty and sharpness, his sadness mixed with irony, that is combined with the look of another person, of Tito. This look probably was part of their human essence for the one and the other. They were two very different people, and yet I still had the feeling, at least on this topic, though not a single word had been spoken between us on it, that he, long ago, not the first year, far from the first year, had parted ways with him somehow.

I would like, however, to return to my reflections associated with the Politburo session in 1948. Although much has already been said about it, something still

remains unsaid. First of all, those present. These sessions—in 1948 and in subsequent years right up until 1952, I will talk about all of them at once, in one place—never had very many people. Usually present were the members of the Politburo and the chief or deputy chief of the Central Committee agitprop administration, and also at the sessions were the minister of cinematography, the chairman of the Committee on Artistic Affairs and three or four writers—the secretaries of the union. One day another two editors from the "fat" journals and editors that combined their duties with being secretaries in the union, as it was at the time with Vishnevskiy, were there. That was it. I think that Tikhon Khrennikov from the composers was at these sessions sometimes as well. Why there weren't at least sometimes actors or artists, or theatrical or film directors, I cannot recall. In short, there were not very many people there. The confiding tone—not so much of the sessions as of the conversations with us—with which Stalin conducted these meetings came from this. The members of the Politburo said little, especially on literary topics. Literature, evidently, especially after the death of Zhdanov, was perceived to be entirely the province of Stalin himself and Stalin alone.

They sometimes spoke up about manuscripts that were being discussed for reproduction that had been submitted by the Committee on Artistic Affairs. Sometimes on shows, more often on movies. This was perhaps understandable. I had no feeling that anyone except Stalin followed literature. Each, of course, read something, one of them one thing and another something else, while they all saw movies and frequently more than once. That must have been why a general discussion arose on the topic of what category of prize to give this or that movie. And when different opinions arose in this realm alone, in movies, Stalin resorted to a vote: "Let's vote—who's for a first prize? Who's for a second?"

He himself never raised his hand, he looked at the raised hands and obviously mentally aligned himself with the one or the other and stated the result: "So, we give it a first." Or, "So, we give it a second."

Nothing of the sort took place that I can remember in discussing all other spheres of the arts. Stalin associated more with the members of the Politburo than with us, the invited, he was interested in their opinions but not in ours. I cannot recall that he ever asked our opinion on a film during these sessions. Everything was the opposite with literature. He never asked anyone their opinions about works of literature except us, as I remember.

I remember how at the last session at which I was present—it took place in 1952 and not in Stalin's office, but in a small meeting room with little reading tables, where we had come and began taking seats far back, expecting that the members of the Politburo coming in with Stalin would sit closer—he said half-jokingly and half-seriously, "Let's sit a little closer, they're here every day, but I rarely see you" (or "you are rare guests here"—something in that spirit was said).

At the time I did not understand the significance that Stalin attached to these meetings that took place once a year. Only after his death, finding out how rarely he received people in his later years, that he didn't even see some of the members of the Politburo for months at a time; all of his exchanges with the world took place primarily through the mediation of several people, there were not very many broad meetings that took place—only then in hindsight did I realize that in the last years of his life Stalin, in inviting us to him, to these sessions, and conducting them at a leisurely pace and, I would say, very patiently toward the expression and repetition of various opinions—as if he were trying to take the pulse of the intelligentsia through us and through discussion with us on the books that were being written and published. With this was connected, in my opinion, not only the nature of the discussions, but also Stalin's manner of behaving. I had occasion many times to read and hear of how cruel he was, rude to people, including those military people with whom he worked every day and on whom he relied during the war years. But I never once saw this Stalin at these sessions. He was never once rude to us—this does not mean that other people have described him untruthfully, it would be silly to think so, people told the truth about him, and their stories merit our complete trust, but once a year, taking the pulse of the intelligentsia in the person of us, he felt it necessary to create consistently for us namely that depiction of himself that he wanted to create. There was no room for rudeness in this depiction of himself.

In rereading my records of 1948, I paid attention to one sentence of Stalin's that I had never once paid attention to earlier in rereading the records. I thought about the point of view that was behind the sentence "Do we need this book now?" that he said about the book, well-written in his opinion, by Vasily Smirnov about the Russian village at the turn of the century. What did that mean, depriving a book—a book that was well-written in Stalin's opinion—of a prize? The fact that Stalin was first and foremost a politician, and then an evaluator of the artistic merits of literature? Naturally that. But not only that. In speaking of Stalin as a politician, in regard to this concrete example, it seems to me to be worth thinking about him as the highest form of a utilitarian approach to history.

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I would add that Stalin in principle combined a utilitarian approach in some instances with a personal attitude toward this or that historical personality in whose actions he thereby obtained additional support from history. I'll return to this again, but first I want to talk about the historical utilitarianism of Stalin more broadly, as a general concept that includes the personal element as well.

I'll begin with the fact that Stalin never spoke up against an enthusiasm for historical topics in general and never summoned writers to an unacceptable depiction of contemporary times as the most important and urgent

matter for them. I do not remember such statements from him. But in analyzing the books that he had supported in different years, I see a concept that he had of the contemporary sound of a work, a concept ultimately connected with an answer to the question "Do we need this book now?" Yes or no?

If we begin with history rather than literature, I have no doubt that the observations of Stalin, Zhdanov and Kirov on the contents of textbooks of the recent and modern history of the USSR that appeared in January of 1936 were not testimony to the sympathy for the tsars and other government figures of tsarist Russia that appeared suddenly in Stalin. Pokrovskiy was repudiated, and in his place was put Shestakov's history textbook, not because there were suddenly doubts about this or that class category in the history of Russia, but because it was necessary to emphasize the power and significance of the national feeling in history and thereby in modern times that was the root of the question. The force of national and historical traditions, especially military ones, was stressed in the interests of a contemporary task. This task, the chief one of the times, required mobilizing everything, including traditional, national and patriotic feelings, to fight German Nazism and its pretensions to eastern space and its theories of the racial inferiority of the Slavs.

If we are discussing literature, then Stalin, over the years when there were Stalin prizes, made his evaluations more evident, supporting or himself advancing for a prize a whole series of historical works. And if we are discussing the cinema, then he even composed a program—about which historical events and about which historical personalities films should be made.

And every time—either behind works that received prizes and behind ideas for the creation of a work about something or someone, works that were later destined, as a rule, for a prize—there stood particularly contemporary political tasks. Stalin at first supported "Chapayev" at one time, and then later advanced the idea of a film about Shchors. Both Chapayev and Shchors were genuine heroes of the civil war, but from the point of view of the overall sweep they were, of course, figures on a secondary plane. And Stalin's support for the film "Chapayev" and his idea of a film about Shchors came at a time when figures of a primary plane, who held high positions in the contemporary army, such as Yegorov, such as Tukhachevskiy or Uborevich, the former commanders of the Southwestern, Western and Far Eastern fronts, were destined for disappearance from the history of the civil war—not simply for disappearance from life, but disappearance from history. Trotsky was a direct political enemy, and there could be no discussion of him or his advocates in the given instance, but it is naturally no accident that a film was made about Shchors according to Stalin's idea, and not about those like Shchors that had already gone into oblivion, but were far more major, and moreover politically unsullied figures, such as, say, Frunze or Gusev.

When "Shchors" came out, the cinema was enriched by another good picture, good overall and stunning in places, but at the same time the concept, important for Stalin at the time, of the history of the civil war and the contemporary line-up of Lenin—Stalin—Shchors—Chapayev—Lazo was consolidated. After the great "Chapayev," the brothers Vasilyev made the very good picture "Volochayevka Days," reinforcing the whole concept under which the figures of the people who led the struggle in the Far East, Uborevich and Postyshev, vanished from the field of view.

In the first list of Stalin prizes, published during the war, at the very height of it, in 1942, there figured two historical novels: "Chinghiz-Khan" by Yan and "Dmitriy Donskoy" by Borodin. The narratives about events that were a little more than seven and almost six centuries removed from 1942 evidently had particularly contemporary significance according to Stalin's considerations. The novel "Chinghiz-Khan" warned what happens to people that are unable to resist invasion and subjected to the victor. The novel "Dmitriy Donskoy" relates the beginning of the end of the Tatar yoke, about how to defeat those who feel themselves to be invincible. These novels were contemporary for Stalin because the history in them also warned of the grief of the vanquished and taught them how to win, moreover using material from one of the most widely known events of Russian history.

These historical novels, coming out before the war, were given prizes right away, in 1942. But another historical novel also had come out in 1940 or 1941 that was read by Stalin when it came out, but only received a prize after several years. This very interesting instance confirms the utilitarianism of Stalin's view of historical works. I am speaking of Stepanov's novel "Port Arthur," which received a prize no sooner or later than in 1946, after Japan had been routed, and the task posed by Stalin—settle up for 1905 and, in particular, get back Port Arthur—had been fulfilled. In 1942 or 1943 Stalin could have fully said about this book, which he liked, "Do we need this book now?" Was a reminder of the fall of Port Arthur needed, especially before the beginning of 1943, before the surrender of Paulus at Stalingrad? In 1946 Stalin felt that this book was needed as something exceedingly contemporary, reminding all of what the tsar and tsarist Russia had lost forty years before Stalin and that the country he headed had returned it now; reminding us of the fact that there were then officers and soldiers who had fought just as courageously as Soviet officers and soldiers in this war, but under a different command, under different leadership, unable to achieve victory.

Maybe I am making it somewhat rough and simple, but I am confident of the essence of what I have written.

From quite a large stream of historical compositions, Stalin singled out those that, in his opinion, served the interests of modern times. The history of the fall of the

now-recovered Port Arthur served modern times, while the history of the Russian village—in roughly the same years, at the turn of the century—did not, according to his impressions and interests, serve modern times, and Stalin answered the question "Do we need this book now?" in the negative.

I think the prize to Kostylev for the novel about Ivan III that was awarded in the first years after the war was also connected with the idea of the modern sound of the novel, the interchange of the times. Ivan III completed in rough form the two-century unification of ancient Russia around Moscow. Stalin evidently had a similar conception at the time of his own role in the history of Russia—everything that had been taken away in the east and the west, and everything that had been ceded before that, had been returned, and the task of whole centuries of uniting the eastern and western Ukraine, even including Bukovina and Transcarpathia, had been resolved.

The figure of Ivan the Terrible was important for Stalin as a reflection of a personal theme of his—the fight against internal adversaries, with the willfulness of the boyars, a fight joined with the aspiration to centralize power. There was an element of historical self-justification here, or more precisely not self-justification so much as self-affirmation. Who knows how this all was in the depths of his soul, but from without the historical theme of Ivan the Terrible looks not so much like self-justification for what had transpired in modern times as it does an affirmation of his own right and the historical necessity for him to do the same thing that Ivan did in his own time.

It must be said that whereas the speech of Stalin to participants in the Victory Parade in evaluating the events of the war sounded a note of self-critical attitude toward events in the first period of the war, in relation to the events of 1937 and 1938 he never took, as I understand it, a self-defensive position. Those it did not touch should be grateful to him for the fact that they remained whole, those that returned and were acquitted should also be grateful to him for the fact that they returned and were acquitted; those that did not return remained among the guilty for the rest of his life.

The fact that Yezhov, made a scapegoat, was punished, never figured anywhere publicly, it was never written of anywhere. It was not officially recognized precisely because he was nothing other than a scapegoat. Although it would seem that the figure of Ivan the Terrible required a dialectical approach toward him in all of his historical features, Stalin in this case was far from dialectics. For him Ivan was unconditionally correct, and this correctness was satisfied, perhaps, by the first part of Eisenstein's "Ivan the Terrible," ingenious in its artistic particulars and finds, but historically immoral. A catastrophe befell Eisenstein with the second part, made after the war. Stalin did not accept that film. Why? There were and could still be differing explanations that were correct to this or that extent.



It seems to me extremely material that the very history of the rule of Ivan was opposed to a continuation of this picture. After the first foreign-policy successes, even before the oprichninas, first and foremost the taking of Kazan, Ivan suffered setback after setback in military campaigns. If there is some figure in Russian history that could be linked with the struggle of Russia for access to the sea, then it is Peter, not Ivan the Terrible, not the one who tried without success, but the one who achieved his aim. Ivan ended his days in a climate of military defeat and a sharp weakening of the military might of Russia. It seems to me that at first Stalin, in his perception of this figure, managed without dialectics. If I am not mistaken, the scenes that encompass not only the first part, but the later ones as well, ended with with one of the victorious episodes in the first half of the Livonian war, access to the sea and the demise of Malyut Skuratov in battle, and popular memory about whom is linked with his name, which has become nominal in the sense of cruelty, with whatever you please, but not just with military victories. The film ends at that moment, when it could end with something like an apotheosis. The later rule of Ivan, which was the prologue to the later poverty of Russia, including the Time of Troubles, did not make it into the film, it was jettisoned and remained overboard. That is now it was planned before the war. I think that in the first part, that which reinforced the positions of Stalin had essentially already been exhausted, and it had confirmed his correctness in the fight against, figuratively speaking, the boyars that he eradicated.

The first part came out onto the screens at the end of the war, while the second was made after it, and the military successes at that point that crowned the chopped-off biography of Ivan that ended the second part could seem after the Great Patriotic War to be very miserly, while the theme of fighting the boyars had been exhausted in the first part. In my opinion, the second part came to Stalin at a time when his interest in analogies with Ivan had weakened, it had become not very topical for him—perhaps temporarily. But the film came to him at precisely that moment, and some elements that annoyed Stalin or episodes of the film that in other cases would not have cut short the fate of the picture, but only led to compulsory reworking, in this case, in the face of the loss of the former special interest in this topic, doomed the film in tragic fashion.

I think that in reasoning this way, I am not too far from the political essence of what transpired in principle. Stalin was inclined to the greatest extent to program namely the cinema. And as an art form that was more state than others, that is, it required the work of state authorization for it and state expenditures, and also because it treated directors in its conceptions about art not as independent artists, but as interpreters implementing what is written. I will never forget how Stolper told me personally the story of the film "The Law of Life" that Stalin had a sharp dislike for in 1940, before the war, which film he had made in tandem with Ivanov according to the screenplay of Avdeyenko. All of the fire

of Stalin's sharp, it could be said, almost merciless criticism rained down on the author of the screenplay, on Avdeyenko, while it was as if Stolper and Ivanov were not there. And then someone at this point addressed the attention of Stalin to the fact that the two directors were sitting there: what, they said, about them, we must punish them too, they said, and not just Avdeyenko. Stalin did not support this. Spinning his finger offhandedly in the air, showing how the film spins in the projector, he said, "And what about them? They just reeled up what he wrote for them." And having said that, he returned to the discussion of Avdeyenko.

Naturally, I do not reduce Stalin's conceptions about directors in general to this instance. He loved the cinema, he saw a lot of it, he himself gave assignments to some directors, among them Chialureli, Dovzhenko and Eisenstein, wherein the latter two wrote screenplays for his films themselves without outside assistance. Of course, he looked at the creation of films more broadly than was manifested in the conversation with the young Stolper and Ivanov, but some nuance of such a trait in his opinions on the types and forms of art was there all the same. In any case, he did not program anything that way—consistently and systematically—like future movies, and this program was connected with contemporary political tasks, although the films that he programmed were almost always, if not always, historical. He did not fantasize on ideas on how and in what way contemporary man should be portrayed. He took a finished figure in history that could be utilized usefully from the point of view of the contemporary political situation and the contemporary ideological struggle. This could be traced through the figures he advanced for films: Aleksandr Nevskiy, Suvorov, Kutuzov, Ushakov, Nakhimov. It is instructive herein that at the height of the war, in establishing the orders of Suvorov, Kutuzov, Ushakov and Nakhimov as decorations for military commanders, he put in first place not those that remained in popular memory—Kutuzov and Nakhimov—but rather those who waged war and won shining victories at the borders and beyond the borders of Russia. And whereas Suvorov and Kutuzov were in the sense of popularity roughly equal figures, in the other case, with Nakhimov and Ushakov, the figure known nationwide was, of course, Nakhimov, and not Ushakov. But connected with Ushakov was the idea of access to the Mediterranean Sea, of victories where offensive operations of the fleet took place, and I assume that it was for namely that reason that he won out over Nakhimov, who all in all defended Sevastopol, in resolving the issue of which of the naval fleet-commander decoration would be the highest one.

Naturally, all of this could be thus or otherwise, but it seems to me that all this is no accident, that it turned out this way with Stalin: the command orders introduced after the victory at Stalingrad were namely in that order: Suvorov, Kutuzov, Ushakov, Nakhimov.

Two films were produced about Glinka—not without a connection with the rehabilitation of "Ivan Susanin" on the stage—one after another. The program of the struggle

with groveling predetermined the creation of a whole series of films that affirmed our priority in this or that sphere: field surgery—Pirogov, radio—Popov, biology—Michurin, physiology—Pavlov. I am far from the idea that the work on these films was forced for their creators—for the most part these films were made with enthusiasm. But in all of this taken together, in the consistency with which these films were made, in the demands that were made of them, there was undoubtedly present a willful origin directly from Stalin associated with his utilitarian attitude toward history, including toward the history of culture and art, with the support of that and only that in history that could serve the direct interests of modern times.

I was not present at the Politburo session that conferred Stalin prizes in 1949, I was on a foreign trip at the time. The next discussion of Stalin prizes at which I was present took place on March 6, 1950. About two years had passed between what I had already recorded, cited and commented on in this manuscript of the prizes discussion in 1948 and this one in 1950. Much had changed and become harsher. Many arrests occurred, including among men of letters. The "Leningrad affair," connected with a whole chain of arrests and removals from posts, had appeared and taken on a terrible hue. The battle against groveling that had been discussed in 1947 had taken on new and very serious forms. The editorial article "An Antipatriotic Group of Theater Critics" printed in PRAVDA proved to be the limit in this sense. This article had the gravest consequences for literature, while the initiative for its appearance in PRAVDA belonged directly to Stalin.

I cannot at this moment go into what happened in literature at the end of 1948 and over the span of 1949. An exposition of all of this should include a whole series of my old records that I do not now have in front of me, and, in order not to return to the same thing twice, we will consider that between what has been written earlier in this manuscript and that to which I am moving now, at least a few dozen pages have been skipped that I will have to fill in. Having provided that proviso, I will move on to 1950.

...

Several days before the Politburo session to confer Stalin prizes that took place on March 6, 1950, I became editor of LITERATURNAYA GAZETA, replacing Yermilov. I had no exact reasons for leaving NOVYY MIR or desiring this departure for myself. Aleksandr Aleksandrovich Fadeyev had his reasons for transferring me from NOVYY MIR to LITERATURNAYA GAZETA, and the reasons for him were evidently weighty enough, if we are speaking of literary intrigues, which sometimes convulsively got the better of Fadeyev like a fever despite all that was great, healthy and honest in his attitude toward literature that compromised his true essence. In the history of the antipatriotic critics, the beginning of which, not foreseeing its terrible later

consequences, was laid by Fadeyev himself, I was a person who from the very beginning did not share Fadeyev's bitterness against these critics. Fadeyev first made an obedient aide out of Sofronov, with a regard for his extraordinary energy but without investigating the essence of this person, who at the first opportunity was transformed into a completely independent literary hangman.

After all of that history, which we will have to touch on in more detail, like it or not, Fadeyev, on the one hand, did not want to deal with Sofronov either as the executive secretary of the union or as his main practical aide. And here now in addition Vladimir Vladimirovich Yermilov began displaying excessive independence and publicly and ungratefully bite the hand that fed him with all of his upheavals for so many years.

As a result Fadeyev, with great effort, was able to convince Aleksey Aleksandrovich Surkov, who later complained repeatedly of it, to leave his beloved journal OGONEK to join the first deputies of Fadeyev, and Sofronov was sent on his way to OGONEK, while Yermilov was removed from the newspaper and realigned to creative work, while I, left alone of his deputies, was slid over to be editor of LITERATURNAYA GAZETA, to which I did not agree right away. Tvardovskiy played a large role in my agreeing to it. Fadeyev, who liked Tvardovskiy very much as a poet and had a high regard for his strictness and independence of judgment, and inwardly even compared himself with him, had long truly wanted to draw Tvardovskiy closer into some great public literary work. It was namely Fadeyev who convinced Tvardovskiy that if the occasion arose, he would agree to go edit NOVYY MIR in my place. And the decisive conversation on the score of LITERATURNAYA GAZETA took place with all three of us together—with Fadeyev and Tvardovskiy. But after the persuasions of Fadeyev, Tvardovskiy suddenly and unexpectedly for me said that if I would agree to pull such a cart as LITERATURNAYA GAZETA, then he, if it were offered, would not refuse to take up my harness at NOVYY MIR. This conversation sealed the matter and a plus for him, perhaps, was my young and self-confident aspirations for the unknown. I had never been the editor of a newspaper, I did not always like the way Yermilov ran the paper at all, and it seemed to me that if I went there, I would re-do much my own way and for the better. As a result, a few days before the session that I will be talking about, I thus became editor of LITERATURNAYA GAZETA and had already signed off on three issues.

My records for March 6, laconic at first, are connected with individual short remarks by Stalin that were most often ironic or with a touch of irony.

One the score of the battle painting under the name of "The Kursk Salient," Stalin noted, "There is no salient here. If they don't write that this is the Kursk Salient, no one would know it." In discussing the question of

whether a prize could be awarded to the performers and director of a show that had been done on the stage for a play that had not received a prize for drama, Stalin expressed doubt: "How could that be? A show without drama—it cannot be."

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Then the question arose of prizes for circus artists. Someone referred to the fact that the people loved this spectacle. And then there followed the observation of Stalin: "So what—the people love a clown too. Should a clown also be included in art, then? No, I do not oppose this on the score of the circus, we must think about this. In this case I object only to your argument concerning the people."

After this the discussion shifted to whether or not the first books of works for which the authors intend to write another, and maybe a third, should receive prizes.

"Well then, he acted cunningly," said Stalin about one writer. "He actually has a first part, but he did not call it a first part of a novel, but a novel. And another person acts honestly: he has the first part of a novel and he calls it the first part of a novel. Why not then, I ask, give him a prize?"

After this the question of giving a prize to the novel "Dauriya" by Konstantin Sedykh was considered.

"I read the criticism of Sedykh's novel," said Stalin, "and, in my opinion, it is largely incorrect. They say of it that the role of the party is poorly shown there, while, in my opinion, the role of the party is shown well by Sedykh. The central figure of Ulybina is excellently depicted, an outstanding figure. They reproach Sedykh for the fact that he does not depict Lazo. But Lazo came in later, and thus he is little depicted. But he is depicted well where he is depicted. Sedykh in the novel criticizes the Cossacks and shows their stratification. There are shortcomings in the novel: it is long-winded. There are places that are very long-winded. There are places where it is told simply inartistically. Here they were saying that Sedykh is reworking his novel and putting new points of commentary in it. But I would not advise him to correct the novel or put commentary into it, that could only ruin it."

After Sedykh's novel, we discussed Vera Panova's short novel "The Bright Shore."

"Panova is a most able woman," said Stalin. "I have always supported her as most able. She writes well. But if we are evaluating her new work, it is weaker than prior ones. Five years ago we could have given a higher prize than now for such a work as this, but it cannot be done now. Panova has a somewhat strange manner of preparing to write something. Here she took one kolkhoz and studied it carefully. And this is incorrect. It must be studied differently. One must study several kolkhozes,

many kolkhozes, and then generalize. Take them together and generalize. And then portray them. But the way she acts in incorrect in the manner of study."

After Panova, the time came to discuss the novel of Koptayeva, "Ivan Ivanovich." Stalin felt it necessary to intervene on behalf of this novel:

"Now they are saying that the novel has incorrect relations between Ivan Ivanovich and his wife. But what happens to her in the novel? It happens as it does in life. He is a great man, he has his great work. He tells her, 'I have no time.' He treats her not as a person and a comrade, but only as a decoration in life. And she meets another person who touches this weak point, this weak spot, and she goes there, to him, to this person. That is what happens in life, that is what happens to us, great people. And this is portrayed faithfully in the book. And the life in Yakutia is described well, correctly. It all speaks of triangles, that there are many triangles in this novel. And so what? It happens."

Here I have to leave my notes in order to save a few words about Fadeyev. As I remember, this session took place not in Stalin's office, but in a small meeting hall. It was essentially not a hall, but quite a large room, in which there were several rows of chairs with reading desks, in front of them a small table for the chairperson, and to the left (from our point of view) a small rostrum for speakers. I do not remember any other time when anyone made use of this rostrum and spoke from it. But this time Stalin invited Fadeyev as the speaker from the Committee on Stalin Prizes to this rostrum. Fadeyev reported standing behind it. Still continuing at that time his work on reworking and adding new chapters to the second version of "Young Guard," Fadeyev, as I remember it, simultaneously with this began collecting material for his own later novel that remained unfinished, "Ferrous Metallurgy." He had traveled to the Urals, he had just come in directly on the eve of this session, he had flown a whole day from there to Moscow, where, in Magnitogorsk, he, as was expressed on this score by Tvardovskiy, later, had really tied one on, plus having a minimum of time to get home and an hour or two to prepare the report—and here he was, at a Politburo session, in front of Stalin, behind this shaky rostrum the wrong size for him. He stood behind it, holding on to it awkwardly, in front of him were the pages of the report or notes for the report, his jacket was somehow on the short side for him, shirt and tight; his face was brick red, while his voice played along the range of his physical state—from hoarseness to a treble—and his recent hair of the dog showed through this hoarseness.

Stalin, sitting at the table, it seemed to me, saw all of this quite well, he understood, and probably moreover knew all as it was, and observed Fadeyev with a mixture of curiosity (how he would get out of the situation) and even some admiration for Fadeyev (let's see if he gets out of this situation, and even how he does it). To stand there, behind that rostrum, under the observant gaze of



Stalin was for Fadeyev probably physically nauseating and morally tormenting, but he, as he knew how to do, gathered together all of his will power, gave the report according to all the rules, said everything that he intended to say, and even got into a dispute with Stalin on the score of the novel by Koptayeva that he, Fadeyev, had a definite dislike for.

What Stalin said about Koptayeva's novel I have written down, but in dialogue with Fadeyev all of this looked somewhat different. Stalin enumerated the merits of the novel, chiefly stressing the fact that that is what happens in real life. Fadeyev, without arguing with him, drove his own home, saying that of course, it happened, but it was all badly written. Triangles occur, but here it was badly written, this triangle. And the life of Yakutia was faithfully presented, true, but from an artistic standpoint it was poorly written, badly written.

"And I feel that it must be given a prize nonetheless," said Stalin in conclusion, with an attitude of patience and a share of curiosity toward Fadeyev's objections.

Having heard this, Fadeyev for the first time, it seemed, removed his hands from the rostrum, helplessly spread them and obstinately, not wishing to consent to the fact that Koptayeva's novel must get a prize, said "That is your will." And holding his outstretched hands in the air helplessly and surprisingly a little while, he again clamped onto the rostrum.

Recalling this now, I catch myself on the fact that I could have confused the day and the year that this happened, I even do not remember until I look in my calendar at the dates of what happened, and it even seems to me that this was two years later, the last time the Stalin prizes were discussed there, at the Politburo. But the fact of how Fadeyev spoke as he held on to the rostrum, how he did not want to agree with Stalin at all on the score of Koptayeva's book and, more correctly, on the score of the significance of the artistic qualities of literature and how he disagreed, spreading his arms—all of that to this day remains before my eyes and in my ears, it exists in the voices and the faces.

But now I will return to my records, to the two most detailed ones that I made in connection with this meeting on March 6, 1950. Both of these entries are connected with fundamentally important things that went beyond the bounds of evaluating the works themselves that were being discussed.

The first of these entries is connected with the novel of Emmanuil Kazakevich, "Spring on the Oder," which was awarded a second-degree Stalin Prize that year.

"There are shortcomings in the novel," said Stalin in concluding the discussion of "Spring on the Oder." "Everything is not faithfully portrayed in it. Rokossovskiy is shown in it, Konev is shown in it, but the main front there, on the Oder, was commanded by Zhukov.

Zhukov has his shortcomings, some of his traits were not loved at the front, but it must be said that he fought better than Konev and no worse than Rokossovskiy. That aspect of Comrade Kazakevich's novel is incorrect. The novel has a member of the Military Council, Sizokrylov, who does there what a commander should do, taking his place on all questions. And that is a slip, there is no Zhukov, as if he never was. This is incorrect. But the novel "Spring on the Oder" is talented. Kazakevich can write and writes well. How can the issue be decided here? Give him a prize or not? If we answer in the affirmative, then we must tell Comrade Kazakevich, so that he can take this into account and correct what is incorrectly done. In any case, to make mistakes the way he did is to do things incorrectly."

That is the end of my entry on the discussion of Kazakevich's novel. After these reflections by Stalin, a prize was given to Kazakevich for the novel anyway. And the next day I met with him in Fadeyev's office at the Writers' Union. Just why it fell to me to speak with Kazakevich I do not recall precisely. It remains to be supposed that Fadeyev, for whom it was more suitable to speak with Kazakevich both out of duty and friendship, was absent for some reason the next day, and Stalin's assignment—the conversation with Kazakevich on the score of "Spring on the Oder" was namely Stalin's assignment—could not be postponed.

I met with Kazakevich and told him word for word all that had happened. He was in a rage and disappointed—both at others and at himself—and, walking back and forth in Fadeyev's office, he gnashed his teeth, moaned and cursed, recalling the editing work on his "Spring on the Oder," how much he had regretted it, how they had forced him to remove not only the name of Zhukov, but the very post of front commander. "Of course," he said irritably, "Stalin's feelings were correct, completely correct. Half of what Sizokrylov does I had the front commander doing, and then I was compelled to shift it to Sizokrylov. How could I have agreed, how could I have submitted? And how could I not—no one would have printed it, they didn't even want to think of printing it until I reworked it. And how can I rework it back now? How can I insert the front commander when the novel has already come out in the journal, two editions have already come out, it has already been translated into other languages, how can I now correct it and supplant the one with the other?"

Kazakevich had mixed feelings that I well understood. Naturally he was glad that his novel had received a prize, but the feeling of the dead end he had been chased into, out of which he did not know how to get even with the aid of Stalin, depressed him.

The last statements of Stalin at that meeting in 1950 that I recorded with all possible precision were nominally directly connected with Boris Lavrenev's play "Voice of America," but it had a knowingly programmatic significance and could have had far-reaching consequences in

all of our criticism and literary studies, in any case, could have elicited changes in its terminology. These consequences did not occur. I will not undertake to say why, most likely because in those years Stalin, as I later heard more than once about him, frequently forgot his own suggestions and did not return to ideas he had advanced. Naturally, no one reminded him of it, and they turned to dust. Sometimes this happened for the better, and sometimes perhaps for the worse. In this case, I think, for the worse. Under any circumstances, it remains for me to cite word for word the entry made on that day, and then to tell what happened afterward.

"And what of the fact that they criticize him," said Stalin about Lavrenev. "Do you remember his old play 'The Break'? It was a good play. And now they take him and criticize everything from the point of view that he is not sufficiently party-oriented, that he does not belong to the party. Is this correct criticism? It is not. They always use the quote 'Down with non-party men of letters.' But they don't understand the sense of it. When did Lenin say this? He said it when we were in the opposition, when we had to attract people to ourselves. When people were some here, others there. When people were seizing upon SRs and Mensheviks. Lenin wanted to say that literature is a public thing. We were seeking people, we were attracting them to us. We, when we were in the opposition, were against non-party members, we declared war on non-party members creating their own camp. But upon coming to power, we answer for all of society, for the bloc of communists and for non-party members as well—this cannot be forgotten. When we were in the opposition, we were against exaggerating the role of national culture. We were against it when these words about national culture were used by the cadets and all the others of that ilk to take refuge in, when they made use of those words. But now we are for national culture. The two different positions must be understood: when we were in the opposition and when we are in power. That is how it was with—what was his name?—Averbakh, yes. At first he was essential, and then became a curse of literature.

"Belik recently spoke and wrote in a journal. Who is that? He also used the words 'Down with non-party men of letters.' Used them wrongly. A RAPPER of our time. Neo-RAPP theory [Russian Association of Proletarian Writers (1923-1932)]. They want all heroes to be positive, all of them to become ideals. But this is stupid, simply stupid. What about Gogol? What about Tolstoy? Where are their positive or entirely positive heroes? What then, must we give up Gogol and Tolstoy too? This is a neo-RAPP viewpoint in literature. They take the quotes, and they themselves don't know why they take them. They take a writer and nag him: what aren't you in the party? Why aren't you in the party? And what then, was Bubennov really in the party when he wrote the first part of 'White Birches'? No. He entered the party later. And just ask this critic how he himself understands party orientation? Eh!"

March 25, 1979

This concludes the records I made at the time of the words of Stalin.

In writing them down, I felt it was essential to set forth in the same place, right after the entry, my own understanding of the essence of what had been discussed. Here is what I wrote at the time: "As far I understood the sense of the discussion, it was about some more correct unification of the forces of literature; attitudes toward it both as an overall area and the positions of the masters of this literature, the masters of all of its social wealth and, ultimately, the masters of all society. It was emphasized that quotes are being used incorrectly, outside of their time and place, the climate is not being considered, they have a very limited approach to the slogan of the party nature of literature, they understand it incorrectly, not in its essence. Demanded therein are not considerations of real life, but some ideal and super-positive heroes, and all of this taken together separates non-party writers from literature."

What can I add now to my entry of the time?

Several days after this meeting, Fadeyev held a small meeting at which I was present, but chiefly present at this meeting were not writers, but communist critics of his personal selection. Imparting even greater significance than I to what Stalin had said on the score of understanding the term party-oriented in literature and the score of the neo-RAPP tendencies that had appeared in literature by virtue of his political experience, and in addition, probably, by virtue of the fact that Stalin used this term of "neo-RAPP criticism" in recalling Averbakh and, accordingly, RAPP in general, among the leaders of which had at one time been Fadeyev himself—Fadeyev evaluated the materiality of what had been said and decided to take his own steps, namely to prepare collectively a presentation to the Central Committee, and in the future for the press, of a short article, at his first thought, done in answer to these questions. The article would explain the harm of the thoughtless and unspecific application of the slogan "Down with non-party men of letters," and would offer other critical terminology in which the concept of the party orientation of literature would be included in the broader concept of the ideological content of literature. The possibility of inflicting needless offense to non-party writers would thereby be eliminated along with the usage of the words "party orientation of literature" both correctly and incorrectly, to the point and not to the point. I took part in the discussion of this issue at the time, I was entirely on the side of Fadeyev, I supported the initial proposals he made, because it seemed to me that Fadeyev had correctly understood the very essence of Stalin's statements on this score and the reasons that has brought forth these statements, and because the term—the ideological content of literature—seemed to me to be more correct and just in relation to all of our literature, including both party and non-party writers.

I add that it seems that way to me at through this day as well, although the history of the formulation of this theoretical document, which took some time, has turned to dust. How it did so, I don't know. I also don't know if I reminded Fadeyev of this or not. Most likely, having expressed himself on this score one day, Stalin considered it to be sufficient and did not remember it himself. No one undertook to remind him either that he had forgotten about it or did not feel it necessary to repeat it. There were probably good grounds for the people close to him to fear reminding Stalin of what he had not addressed at his own initiative. This must have been connected with a certain amount of risk, as was confirmed by no small amount of prior experience.

I was not at the session discussing Stalin prizes for 1950: I was laid up with a fever at the time. If my memory does not betray me, my latest bout with pneumonia. But in the middle of March 1952, when the Stalin prizes were conferred for the last time, I was present at the session. I cannot cite the exact date when this occurred—I do not have it written down. But the report of the awarding of prizes was usually published twice, at the latest three days after the session, and I have before me the *LITERATURNAYA GAZETA* for March 15, 1952, and I think I am not far from the truth in saying that the session was sometime in the middle of March.

This session was distinguished from all the prior ones by the fact that Stalin himself did not conduct it, but from the start conceded the chair to Malenkov, who, it must be said, was not quite feeling himself. He sat at the chairman's table, and the rest were nearby. Stalin sat near this chairman's table at a reading desk like all the rest of the participants in the meeting. By the way, he sat little, he walked back and forth along the row he was seated in, looking at those present, speaking out and asking questions. The chairmanship of Malenkov was practically reduced to the fact that he named this or that item to be discussed in the order they were placed in the sections of the draft decree.

I am not citing my entries of the time in the sequence I have them in, but rather in the order that I want to comment on today, proceeding from the more personal to the more general and material.

In discussing the works that were advanced for third-category prizes, the first thing I remember is that Stalin had not read all these books. When the discussion touched on a prize for Tursun's novel "Teacher" and the short novel by Bayalinov "On the Banks of Issyk-Kyl," Stalin suddenly asked, "What are you giving them a prize for? For the fact that they are good books or for the fact that they are representatives of national republics?"

This phrasing of the question forced several of those who had reported on these things to stop short. Noting this hesitation, Stalin said, "You are depriving people of perspective. They will decide that this is good. But people must have perspective. If you give a prize out of

sympathy, you will kill creativity thereby. They must work more, and they will decide that it is good. After all, if this gets a prize, what will they strive for? An ability to work can only be cultivated through strictness, only with the aid of strictness in evaluation is perspective created."

When the discussion later touched on the novel by Yanka Bryl "Light Beyond the Marshes," which they praised and said was good, Stalin suspiciously asked, "Why is it good? Are all peasants good there? All kolkhozes are progressive? No one argues with anyone? All are in complete agreement? No class struggle? Everything goes fine in general, and so the book is good. Yes? And what about artistically, is this book good?"

And only when they passionately convinced him that this book by Yanka Bryl was actually a good one from an artistic point of view did he consent to its advancement for a prize, rejecting therein the prior items that had been discussed.

And today, tearing myself away from the record, I will relate my thoughts on this score. There was somewhat of a contradiction in the fact that Stalin himself was expanding the circle of prizes awarded, approaching this with a certain cynical benevolence and tolerance. It is enough to recall: "He wants it. He asks for it," and everything connected with it. All of these third-category prizes had arisen at his own initiative, he had at least doubled, if not more, the circle of things getting prizes every year. And he himself, chiefly where it concerned literature, suddenly began to display exactingness, rejected weak items, spoke of the necessity of high artistic quality, went into detail—what worked and didn't work for this author, speaking out in a spirit that an excess of political commentary could ruin a book, that one must hew closer to life, that literature does not create single positive, ideal heroes, and so forth and so on.

How to explain this contradiction in judgment and even in deed? A shift in sentiments and spiritual state? Hardly that alone. I think, however strange it may sound, that there was in Stalin something similar to Fadeyev in their evaluations of literature. First and foremost, he really loved literature, he felt it to be the most important of the arts, the most determinant and ultimately defining all the rest or almost all the rest. He loved to read and loved to talk about what he read with complete knowledge of the subject. He remembered books in detail. Somewhere in him—I have no doubt of this—there was some intrinsic artistic streak, maybe coming from his youthful occupation with poetry, his passion for it, although in general he considered the conferring of prizes as a politician, as a political matter first and foremost, and a multitude of statements of his that I heard bear this out. At the same time, he loved some of these books, and some he did not, as a reader. His taste was far from error-free. But he did have his own tastes. I will not build conjectures regarding how much he liked Mayakovskiy or Pasternak, or how serious an artist he considered Bulgakov. There are certain grounds for feeling that in



the first instance, the second and the third his tastes did not betray him. In other cases it did. He liked, the sharp and nervous manner of writing, full of exaggerations and hyperbolic details, characteristic of, say, Vasilyevskaya. He loved that writer and was angered when someone did not like her. At the same time, he liked things of a completely different sort: the books of Kazakevich and Nekrasov's "In the Trenches of Stalingrad."

Probably there took place within him a struggle, invisible to outside eyes, between personal and inner evaluations of the books and evaluations of their political and immediate significance, evaluations that he was not shy about and did not hide. For example, it was not a problem for him at the time, in 1952, to give first-category prizes in prose simultaneously to Stepan Zlobin's novel "Stepan Razin," which he liked very much namely as an artistic work, and Vilis Latsis' novel "Toward the New Shore," which he did not like at all as a work of art but which he considered so important that he defined it as a first-category prize. This is what he said about Latsis' novel at the session under discussion: "This novel has artistic shortcomings, it is inferior to Vasilevskaya's, but it will have great significance in the Baltic region and, moreover, abroad."

As a result Vasilevskaya's trilogy, which he loved as a reader but which, in his opinion, did not have the maximum political significance at the moment, received a second-category prize, while Latsis' novel "Toward the New Shore," which was, as he supposed, inferior to Vasilevskaya's novel, received a first prize.

While doubtful this time of the number of books deserving third-category prizes, Stalin here proposed—quite unexpectedly for all those present—giving a prize to Dmitriy Yeremin for his novel "Threat over Rome," and cited the following motives: "Our writers all write about one and the same thing, all about one and the same thing. They very rarely tackle anything new or unknown. They all have the same themes. And here is someone who sat down and wrote about a life unfamiliar to us. I read it and found out what he is like. It turns out he was a script writer, he was there, in Italy, for a long time, he wrote about the situation in Italy, about the revolutionary situation that is ripening there. There are shortcomings, there are perhaps even blunders, but the novel will be read with interest by the readers. It plays a useful role."

March 26, 1979

After this evaluation, quite unexpected for me, of the novel "Threat Over Rome," which no one had proposed for a prize, it was quite difficult to raise one's hand and speak on that topic, the more so as Stalin had spoken quite definitively.

The author of the novel, Dmitriy Ivanovich Yeremin, was my good friend from the Literary Institute and the script-writing school. The only misfortune was that his novel was very weak and feeble. This alone, however,

truthfully speaking, would not have forced me to raise my hand. Behind the dispute that Fadeyev had entered into with Stalin on the score of Koptiyayeva's novel "Ivan Ivanovich" was his then fundamental failure to accept the artistic merits of literature of this type, and he could not or did not want to restrain himself and and call good what was bad. In this instance—with Yeremin's novel—I did not have such feelings, and I probably would not have had as much spirit as Fadeyev, after the statements of Stalin, to enter into an altercation with him on the artistic merits of Yeremin's novel. But there was an attendant circumstance here: literally a day or two before this, a letter by not one but two specialists on Italy had arrived at LITERATURNAYA GAZETA in which they listed several pages of all types of errors, inaccuracies and absurdities that testified to the complete ignorance of the author of "Threat over Rome" of the material on which he wrote in the book. This letter also forced me to raise my hand. It seemed to me that I was obliged to speak of it.

When I told about this letter and its contents, Malenkov immediately asked me, "Where is it? With you?" Behind this question was the unspoken assumption that I would now dig this letter out of my pocket and place it on the table. But I naturally did not have it with me, because the appearance of the novel "Threat over Rome" among the works that were proposed for Stalin prizes was completely unexpected for me. I said that I did not have the letter with me, but I could present it tomorrow if it was required.

"When you pose such questions, you must have the materials with you," said Malenkov.

I sat in my place while "Threat over Rome" was awarded a third-degree Stalin Prize.

In order not to return to this theme, which left no trace in my records of the time, I add that there was another trial to come for me after my speaking up had ended in failure. At the very end of the session, when it seemed that all of the prizes had been passed, Stalin touched the bundle of books and journals lying before him, and most often, as I was able to note, there were issues of ZVEZDA there, because he followed this Leningrad journal without pause as before, and through it Leningrad, and he said, "Here is printed a decent novel of our well-known submariner Iosseliani as translated from Georgian by Kremlev. Wouldn't it be worth it to give it a prize? What would be your opinions?"

The opinions were positive.

"It must be given one," "It must, it must," "A good book"—These were roughly the sort of replies I heard from the first rows, where the members of the Politburo sat.

And here I raised my hand again. But this time I did not vacillate at all and felt I simply did not have the right to remain silent. I knew the story behind the book "Notes of a Submariner," a book that really wasn't bad, written by the man of letters Ilya Kremlev from the stories of the submariner Iosseliani. By the time this book had been written, several stories had already appeared in literature with the not very pretty trait of when co-authors—the authors of the recollections and the authors of their literary texts—fought between themselves regarding the royalties. Moreover, the so-called literary "polishers" usually suffered defeat in these altercations: in the first edition, they and the authors usually divided the royalties among themselves as had been agreed, but in a number of subsequent cases the author of the literary record was simply deprived of his portion of the royalties. This could be done according to the letter of author's copyright law in subsequent publications. Obviously fearing this, Kremlev had contrived the form of translation from Georgian into Russian, and the novel of Iosseliani appeared in ZVEZDA with that designation, although in actual fact there had been and could be no translation, since Iosseliani (by nationality Svanetian but by circumstances of his life a student in a Russian children's home from an early age) did not know Georgian at all. He spoke only Russian, and it was physically impossible to translate him from Georgian. But after the novel in the journal had had some success and good reviews, it was published as a separate book. Kremlev, with the idea of its possibly being awarded a Stalin prize in the future, had forced Iosseliani, none too well versed in literary matters, to sign an agreement with him, Kremlev, which in the event of the awarding of a Stalin prize to the book would have them split this prize equally. The agreement was, as far as I know, unprecedented in literary life. A certain while after this, the next dispute arose between Iosseliani and Kremlev on mutual respectability, and Iosseliani, having displayed extraordinary courage during the war years, and now lost in the literary jungles, had come to me at LITERATURNAYA GAZETA and, setting forth his apprehensions, related to me in particular this preventive agreement regarding a Stalin prize. I had never heard of such a thing, and at first I did not believe my ears, and it probably showed on my face. Then Iosseliani said that he would sit there and write down everything as it was, and let it lie with me as proof. I had no reason to object to this, Iosseliani wrote down everything he had told me, and I put this paper into the safe.

About a month passed and Ilya Kremlev, obviously having heard about the unfriendly acts on the part of Iosseliani, also appeared at LITERATURNAYA GAZETA with a quite slanderous letter in which was set forth various transgressions by his co-author Iosseliani. I put this letter in the safe along with the first one. That a problem with the Stalin prize that had already been split by agreement would ever actually arise never entered my head. But as the editor of a newspaper who had already encountered several such stories, albeit not as scandalous, it seemed to me that these materials among others

could help us to prepare an article on the abnormal situation in this sphere of literary activity and to advance proposals on how to introduce a strict framework into this matter so as not to discredit either men of letters or ordinary people.

Thus, having heard the exclamations "It must be given one," "It must, it must" and "A good book," I raised my hand and requested the floor. It was given to me. I said that the book was in fact interesting, but it could not be given a Stalin prize, at least because the publication of this book had begun with a deceit: it was not a translation from Georgian done by Kremlev, but a literary record that could not have been translated from Georgian, because Iosseliani did not know Georgian.

I well remember how, turning in unwieldy fashion with his chair creaking under him, Beria sharply cut me short: "How can he not know it? How can it be—Iosseliani doesn't know Georgian? He knows Georgian."

"No," I said, "he does not. The sailors, his comrades-in-arms, know it, and he himself does not conceal it, he mentions it in his letter to LITERATURNAYA GAZETA."

"Where is this letter? Do you have this letter?"

"At LITERATURNAYA GAZETA," I said.

It seemed to me that Beria wanted to say something else, but at that moment Stalin asked, "So. What are your opinions, give this book a prize or not?" He said this calmly, possibly having decided even to ignore the not very material—from his point of view—story of the translation that did not exist.

"Comrade Stalin," I said. "You should know that Kremlev signed an agreement with Iosseliani in advance that if they were to receive a Stalin prize, they would split it. It seems to me that when that is done, a prize cannot be given."

"And where is your proof that this is so?" Beria turned to me again. "Do you have it or are you just chattering?" This time he was even more rude and aggressive.

I was unable to answer this question, because silence suddenly settled. Evidently, I had not heard the beginning of the sentence spoken by Stalin over the shouting of Beria, and in the silence I heard only the answer.

"We will remove the question," he said.

He had a disgusted and dissatisfied look on his face.

The active intervention of Beria in this matter alarmed me: there was a danger concealed here, a serious one. Who knows what he could have done? We did not know then about Beria what we found out later, but we already had some conception of the fact that he was a quite

terrible person and, as they say, I carried that conception with me. Therefore, as soon as the Politburo session ended, I immediately rushed over to LITERATURNAYA GAZETA, thinking along the way what could happen: while the session continued, while I was on my way there, who could have appeared without me, opened the safe and by the time I got there, the papers that I was referring to could prove to be gone. What then? Everything was in place, however, the papers were there. I gathered them up and, without wasting any time, went to my old friend, the stenographer Muza Nikolayevna Kuzko, waited while she typed up two copies of both letters, took one of them back and put it in the safe at LITERATURNAYA GAZETA, put the second in my pocket and took the originals to the Writers' Union and put them in the safe there. I had my own logic herein: I understood that Beria could hardly do anything to me in that situation, in the face of Stalin's benevolent attitude toward me, but anything at all could happen with the letters, they must be considered. In any case, that is how it seemed to me.

The next morning I came to the union in the early morning and did what was proper: a little after nine I was called from the higher-ups, but not by Beria, from the secretariat of Bulganin, then the minister of the armed forces, and they asked me if I could present the documents connected with the book "Notes of a Submariner" that I had mentioned the day before. I said that yes, I could send for them. Calling in the chief of our chancellery at the Writers' Union, I took the copies from my pocket, took the originals from the safe at the union, gave them to her to check the one and the other, after which the corresponding signatures and imprints were put on the copies. This was hardly done when the courier from the Ministry of the Armed Forces arrived to gather up the materials.

Today I write about all of this with some doubt and even amusement at myself and at the meticulousness that is distinctly seen from the great distance of time. Now all of this seems somehow ridiculous, but at the time it was not funny at all, and in telling about the times, I am probably right anyway in not omitting things of this nature.

Returning to the notes:

After some other books had been rejected, one of those present at the session made the suggestion to augment the list of books being awarded prizes with the novel "Hot Hour" by Olga Ziv. It turned out that Stalin had read this novel, which had not been advanced for a prize earlier. In answer to the suggestion to give this novel a prize, he said that the novel was interesting, but for some reason the everyday life of the workers was almost never described in our novels. The everyday life of the workers was poorly described. In all of the novels there was not everyday life, just one competition, and the everyday life of the workers was not described, Stalin repeated. One exception was Kochetov's novel "Zhurbiny," that had the lives and everyday living of the workers. But this

book was the sole exception in which was related how a person lived, what he received, what his cultural interests were, what his life was like, what everyday life was like. Ziv did not have this sort of everyday life of the workers, and without it there were no workers. Although the book was well written, written with a great knowledge of the matter.

Having declined the book, Stalin continued speaking for several minutes about how little we were occupied with the life and everyday living of people and how this was a great drawback in our literature.

The whole conversation this day had started with a discussion of the novel "Stepan Razin" by Stepan Zlobin. I want to single out this entry and relate especially how this discussion went, because it made a powerful and, at the same time, depressing impression on me.

Again, the records:

"Zlobin has uncovered the difference between the peasant and Cossack foundations of the Razin movement," said Stalin. "Zlobin has revealed it for the first time in literature and has done it well. In general, out of the three movements—Razin, Pugachev and Bolotnikov—only the Bolotnikov movement was an intrinsically peasant revolution. The Razin and the Pugachev movements were movements with a strong Cossack flavor. Both Razin and Pugachev suffered union with the peasants, were reconciled to them, they did not understand all of the force and might of the peasant movement."

That is my whole entry for that time.

March 27, 1979

I well remember that Stalin, having spoken of the political aspect of the novel and its historical veracity, shifted to its artistic merits and praised Zlobin's novel for several minutes in phrases that he rarely used. He called the novel very talented, he said that the author was a talented person and that he had written an outstanding historical work. Judging from everything that Stalin said about the novel, he liked it very much as it was written by Zlobin.

It would seem that everything should have been concluded here, but at the moment when I, like the others, felt the the discussion would move on to the next work, that we were clearly all finished with Zlobin, someone—I don't remember who, perhaps it was Malenkov chairing the Politburo—flipping through some file, said, "Comrade Stalin, we have checked it out and report that during his captivity, in a German concentration camp, Zlobin behaved poorly, there are serious complaints against him."

This was like thunder out of the clear blue sky, such as I had never heard at any session, although I understood, of course, that in preparing the materials for conferring



prizes, it was someone's job to present the corresponding information on the authors that existed in dossiers somewhere. But it had never been spoken of once until now, while if something connected with this was discussed, it obviously had been somewhere else and at a different time, without us sinners.

Hearing this, Stalin stopped—he was walking around at the time—and was silent for a long time. Then he went along the rows past us—once across and back, again across and back, a third time—and only then, the silence was interrupted suddenly by a soft question that sounded quite loud in the complete quiet, addressed not to us but to himself.

"To forgive..." he walked further, turned and, stopping once again, finished, "...or not to forgive?"

And he started walking again. I do not know how much time was occupied with this, maybe not much at all, but it all seemed unbearably long because of the tension.

"To forgive or not to forgive?" Stalin repeated, now not separating the two halves of the phrase.

He walked some more, turned again. And repeated again with the same intonation, "To forgive or not to forgive?"

He walked back and forth two or three times and, answering himself, said, "Forgive."

Before our eyes, in our presence, Stalin thus for the first time single-handedly decided the fate of a person that we knew, whose book we had read. I knew Zlobin less than the others, I was indifferent toward his book, and toward him himself I had neither sympathy nor antipathy, but this feeling itself, right here, before our eyes, deciding the fate of a person—to be or not to be for him, because "To forgive or not to forgive" was pronounced with an intonation, it seemed to me, that behind it stood either a Stalin prize, on the one hand, and on the other, a camp and, perhaps, death. There was something terrible and oppressive in all of this, onerous—and that was not my feeling later, but at the time.

If we speak of it later, the discussion was essentially not about whether or not to forgive a person guilty before his country who had written an outstanding book devoted to the history of that country. Zlobin, as was later proven, was not only not guilty of anything before his country, but on the contrary had displayed exceptional courage in the camp and played an important role in the Soviet camp underground. In our eyes, then, the discussion was not whether or not to forgive a guilty person, but rather whether or not to believe slander of someone not at all guilty of anything, correspondingly formulated in the spirit of the times with all of the essential attributes of pretended irrefutability.

In thinking about this now, in hindsight, you see a stage on which Stalin plays his role of the supreme judge possessing the right to punish and pardon without appeal, even more onerous than it looked to me that day. But an unexpected consideration to all this arises as well. In hindsight, common sense suggests to me that what had never come to light in any other cases, what was obviously always discussed ahead of time, could hardly have suddenly and unexpectedly come to light with Zlobin in this single instance. The story I related about Chetverikov does not refute this—there the discussion concerned a journal that Stalin suddenly read and remembered and, unexpectedly to all, cited the names of the authors of a play, one of whom happened to be sitting in a camp. It fully could have been, since no one knew in advance that Stalin would cite this play. But with Zlobin, his novel, which headed the whole list of Stalin prizes, was offered for a first-category prize, it could not have been.

Today I am almost convinced that Stalin had known perfectly well, before the session, about this dossier that had been prepared in the corresponding place on Zlobin, and had then decided, without reckoning with this dossier, to give Zlobin a first-category prize for "Stepan Razin" without even lowering the prize to a second- or third-category one, and he left it as a first-category. If so, then the scene—"To forgive or not to forgive"—was accordingly played out for us, those representatives of the intelligentsia that were present. So that we knew how it happens, who ultimately decides such issues. Who, despite the transgressions of the person, makes the decision to forgive him and give him a prize. Who reserved the right to this higher justice, even in the face of the person's guilt. Some other people only remember the guilt and feel that he cannot be forgiven, but Stalin feels that guilt can be forgiven, if that same person does something outstanding.

I cannot assert with reliability that all of this was just so, but I am almost convinced that the my guess is fair and that the ability under certain circumstances to be a good, maybe even great, actor was characteristic of Stalin and comprised an indispensable part of his political gift. One more detail from this same last meeting of 1952 reinforces me. It seems to me now that at that meeting Stalin twice acted for us, as if before an audience specially designated for it—the first time was with the Zlobin novel, and the second with the novel "Yugoslavian Tragedy" by Maltsev.

First the text of my entry, and then the way it is preserved for me.

When they began discussing the novel "Yugoslavian Tragedy" by Orest Maltsev, Stalin posed the question "Why Maltsev, and Rovinskiy in parentheses? We already talked about this last year, we banned presenting them for a prize when there are dual names. Why is this done? Why write a dual name? If a person has chosen a literary pseudonym for himself, that is his right, we will not mention the other one again, simply out of basic

decency. A person has the right to write under the pseudonym he has chosen. But evidently someone wants to stress that this person has a dual name, emphasize that he is Jewish. Why emphasize that? Why is that done? Why sow anti-Semitism? Who needs this? A person must write under the name under which he himself writes. A person wants to have a pseudonym. He feels that this is natural for him. Why then drag it out, pull back?"

That is my entire entry on this score. I would add that Stalin spoke in very angry fashion, agitated, even, I would say, with a hint of irreconcilability to what had happened, although in this case he was wide of the mark.

March 30, 1979

The point is that the author of the novel "Yugoslavian Tragedy," Orest Mikhaylovich Maltsev, after whose name was the Rovinskiy that so annoyed Stalin, was actually Russian in derivation, a native of the village of Skarodnaya in Kursk Oblast, while he had put the Jewish surname Rovinskiy, which, by the way, coincided with the surname of the editor of IZVESTIYA at the time, after his own sonorous name of Orest on his earlier book of stories that were also called the quite sonorous "Hungarian Rhapsody." The reasons for this were unknown to me, but like it or not, one had to stand up and say that in this instance anti-Semitism had no place in putting the name Rovinskiy in parentheses. I ask myself the question of why it was namely me that was compelled to stand up and give this information. Most likely because roughly a year before this, in the pages of LITERATURNAYA GAZETA and KOMSOMOLSKAYA PRAVDA, there had transpired a discussion of pseudonyms among Bubennov, Sholokhov and myself that did not escape the attention of the readers or writers. This question took on a most morbid nature in 1949, during the sadly memorable campaign against the cosmopolitan critics, when people strove as often as possible to put the real European surname of the author right after a pseudonym long used in literature and sounding quite customary.

A bitter share of personal responsibility lies with me for some of the things that happened then that I talked about, then wrote in the press, and about which I will say more in these notes when I write the chapter on 1949. But I was not, of course, an anti-Semite, and when I spoke and wrote during those gloomy times, parentheses were not put after pseudonyms. I well remember how painfully my heart was lashed by the indignant letter sent to me by writer Frida Abramovna Vigdorova, a pure and austere person whom I respected. She was indignant with me in this letter: how could I, how could I have permitted myself to put these cursed parentheses after pseudonyms in one of my features. And as a matter of fact, I had nothing to do with it, simply in setting out my already quite nasty feature for some discussion, the compiler himself had put parentheses in wherever it came into his head.

Some time passed, the acuity of this issue fortunately had seemingly abated, some of the most obvious mutual lashings and injustices had been corrected, albeit with creaking, when in February of 1951 KOMSOMOLSKAYA PRAVDA, I don't know at whose initiative and under whose pressure, suddenly came out with an article by Mikhail Bubennov titled "Are Literary Pseudonyms Needed Now?" Evidently somebody, preparing the soil for something new in this spirit, a campaign against cosmopolitan critics, needed to release such a trial balloon. The article contained a certain share of mimicry, but anti-Semitic ears perked up quite clearly from it.

We at LITERATURNAYA GAZETA decided not to leave this article unpunished, and I answered it in brief. The heavy artillery was then brought in against us. In what manner and who organized the fact that an answering article supporting Bubennov in KOMSOMOLSKAYA PRAVDA was signed by Sholokhov, I do not know. My first reaction when I read it was to call him and ask him, a person with whom I had up to this time not had any personal clashes whatsoever, "Misha, did you really write that?" This was a stupid impulse, because to such a question, like it or not, a person can only answer with a confirmation, but I somehow even today do not completely believe he authored it.

There was nothing to be done, however, an answer had to be given again, this time to Sholokhov. The discussion ended with my reply. Evidently the trial balloon had lost air somewhat at KOMSOMOLSKAYA PRAVDA, it came down prematurely, and the effort to unmask pseudonyms and eradicate them was not supported by either those or that from whom or which such support was expected.

Perhaps, putting an asterisk here, I will interrupt my narrative and cite as a footnote to it the text of that discussion on pseudonyms that took up a little over ten typewritten pages, but wherein, it seems to me, there was a certain relation to Stalin's statements regarding parentheses which I have already cited as well as to some of the most gloomy events that unfurled in the last months of Stalin's life.

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#### Are Literary Pseudonyms Needed Now?

Mikhail Bubennov

KOMSOMOLSKAYA PRAVDA, February 27, 1951

The use of pseudonyms, that is, invented names, as a phenomenon of public procedure has quite a long history. In tsarist Russia this phenomenon was caused chiefly by the conditions of the public order based on violence and oppression. Very many revolutionaries, public figures, writers and journalists of a democratic inclination who were fighting against tsarism and were frequently working underground were forced by life itself

and the whole climate of their activity to hide behind pseudonyms and conspiratorial names. For some writers and figures in the arts, pseudonyms served either as camouflage from "secular" society that scorned their "unworthy" activity, or as an expression of their ideological essence and political thrust, or they carried within them a distinctive protest against the existing order, and sometimes a dream for the future. Finally, representatives of the oppressed nationalities, who frequently could only appear in Russian and thus took on Russian names and surnames, were forced to use pseudonyms.

After the socialist revolution which established a new social order in our country, the situation was sharply altered. The basic reasons that incited people to conceal themselves with pseudonyms earlier were destroyed. It is of course completely natural and justified that some comrades who have used pseudonyms for many years continue to use them, but this is only because their pseudonyms have long been surnames familiar to broad segments of the people. But there was not a single instance where some party or state figure who has entered the public arena after the revolution has replaced his surname with a pseudonym. Hasn't been and won't be! Pseudonyms, as a rule, were used for some time only by rural correspondents and under certain circumstances, but this is understandable—they were fighting for the cause of socialism under conditions of the cruellest class struggle. And only the workers of literature have proven to be vehement adherents of the old tradition.

Socialism as constructed in our country has decisively eliminated all reasons for people to take pseudonyms. Any public and cultural activity aimed at building communism receives every kind of support in our country. People engaged in such activity who are striving to advance the common cause with the aid of Bolshevik criticism are held in great honor here. Nothing hinders them from coming forth openly without hiding from society behind pseudonyms. Our society, on the contrary, wants to know the true and genuine names of these people and to cover them with great glory.

Despite all of this, some men of letters, with an impressive persistence worthy of better application, support the old and long outmoded tradition. Moreover, many of these literati are young people who are just beginning their literary activity.

I will give some examples.

The young and able Russian writer Ferenchuk suddenly and for no apparent reason took the pseudonym Ferens. What for? How is the surname Ferenchuk worse than the pseudonym Ferens?

The Mariy poet A.I. Bikmurzin took the pseudonym Anatoliy Bik. What is going on here? The poet likes the first third of his surname and not the rest?

The Udmurt writer I.T. Dyadyukov decided to become Ivan Kudo. Why didn't he like his own name?

The Belorussian poetess Yu. Kagan selected the pseudonym Edi Ognetsvet. What necessity forced her to do that?

The Ukrainian poet Ye. Bondarenko, evidently looking at the others, could not stand it and changed his surname, albeit just by two letters but a change nonetheless, and now signs with the pseudonym Bandurenko.

The Chuvash poet N. Vasyanka signs as Shalanka, the young Moscow poet Lides became L. Likhodeyev, S. Faynberg is S. Severtsev, N. Rambakh is N. Grebenev.

The fans of pseudonyms are always trying to come up with justifications for their strange inclination.

Some say "I cannot sign my own name, there are many with the same name." But everyone knows that in Russian literature we have three Tolstoys, and everyone knows them and doesn't confuse them!

Others exclaim "Excuse me, but I take a pseudonym only because it is difficult to pronounce my name and readers do not remember it well." Everyone understands, however, that if you create good works, the readers remember your name! (Of course, we do encounter disharmonious and even insulting surnames—the landowners gave them to the slaves at one time. Such names should simply be changed under the established procedure.)

In short, there are many justifications.

But for all those who don't respect their surnames, I would like to cite here the lines of the famous poem by Sergey Smirnov "To All Comrades Smirnov." Relating with pride how many people shared his surname across the country, Sergey Smirnov writes further that he found out about one person with the name from the newspaper—an enemy of the people unmasked:

I contemplated,  
I won't hide it,  
Because of him, because of that scoundrel  
Changing  
my own name.

But here S. Smirnov recalled all of his relatives and others who shared the name, about the his uncle the toiler, who left bright recollections of himself...

There was a change,  
It was completely clear,  
That this was a clear betrayal  
Of my fathers and his fathers.  
No!  
With all my strength  
I swear to keep my name  
For all future days



In the name of my kin and others  
In the name of you,  
My new brothers-in-arms,  
Protecting the Motherland like a home,  
In the name of the army of Smirnovs,  
Living by just labor!

As we see, the poet Sergey Smirnov, unlike many of those mentioned and not mentioned in this article, had very serious grounds for not only taking a pseudonym, but even changing his name. But he did not do so—that is how strong the feeling of pride is for him for his family, which had borne the name Smirnov from time immemorial!

Why do we pose the question of whether we need literary pseudonyms?

Not only because this is a literary tradition, as many others like it, that has outlived its time. Under Soviet conditions, it even sometimes inflicts serious harm on us. Frequently people hide behind pseudonyms who have an anti-social view of literary affairs and do not want the people to know their true names. It is no secret that pseudonyms are very willingly used by cosmopolitans in literature. It is no secret that pseudonyms today serve as a means of camouflage for individual quasi-literary types and hacks and helps them engage in all sorts of abuses and machinations in the press. They frequently come out simultaneously under various pseudonyms or often change them, covering their dirty tracks in every way possible. There are instances where such shady individuals praise some work in one newspaper and a week later censure it in another.

By the way, a few words on the role of the editors of newspapers and journals in this matter. Frequently editors look aside as some literary types and journalists hide behind pseudonyms, and sometimes indulge in this distinctive chameleonism themselves. Some journalist writes a small notice, say, about the beginning of the grain harvest on a kolkhoz and unfailingly puts his pseudonym at the bottom, while the editors feel that this is how it should be. And they feel that way for nothing!

It seems to us that the time has come to put an end to pseudonyms once and for all. Any name of a Soviet person of letters working honestly in literature in our country is felt to be beautiful and is uttered with great respect by our multinational people. The fight against pseudonyms doubtless has exceedingly great significance in raising the personal responsibility of everyone working in the world of letters.

#### On a Certain Note

LITERATURNAYA GAZETA, March 6, 1951

Soviet copyright law states that "only an author has the right to decide whether a work will be published under the real name of the author, under a pseudonym or

anonymously" (BSE, 2nd edition, Vol. 1, p 281). The resolution of this issue today, however, earlier resolved by each author separately, has been taken on single-handedly by the writer Mikhail Bubenov and, having resolved it one for all, he has proposed that from this day forth literary pseudonyms be considered a "distinctive chameleonism" which "the time has come to put an end to once and for all."

In his note "Are Literary Pseudonyms Needed Now?" (KOMSOMOLSKAYA PRAVDA, No 47), Mikhail Bubenov cites a list of young authors whose literary pseudonyms do not suit him, Bubenov.

In my opinion, it would be more sensible if Bubenov would address his considerations to these comrades personally and separately, and not in the press and wholesale, since the question of whether he does or does not like the literary pseudonym of this or that comrade is a personal issue and not a public one.

However, if Mikhail Bubenov has decided to begin the publication of lists of writers with pseudonyms, then it is incomprehensible why he skirted the names of a whole series of our eminent writers in this list who selected for themselves such literary names as Polevoy, Pogodin, Maltsev, Yashin, Samed Vurgun, Ostap Vishnya, Galin, Aybek, Krapiva, Yan, Maksim Tank, M. Ilin, Kiacheli, the brothers Tur, Medynskiy, Ivan Le or Bashirov.

It seems to me personally that Bubenov has consciously named the pseudonyms of several young people of letters and has skirted this (and it could be expanded) list of pseudonyms of well-known writers, since in citing it to Bubenov the absurdity of the unceremonial and free-and-easy accusation of "chameleonism" essentially hurled at all literati in his note who have for this or that reason (relating to themselves and no one else) selected a literary pseudonym, would at once be a hundred times more prominent (clear, by the way, even now).

It only remains for me to add that the majority of the reasons given by Bubenov against literary pseudonyms are ridiculous. "Our society," writes Bubenov, "wants to know the true and genuine names of these people and to cover them with great glory." It is incomprehensible why our society wants to know and heap with glory the name Kampov and why it should not do so for the literary name of Boris Polevoy.

"Everyone understands," writes Mikhail Bubenov, "create good works and the reader will remember your name." It is not understandable why readers should unfailingly remember the name of Rogalin and what stops them from remembering the literary name of Boris Galin.

In speaking of disharmonious names, Bubenov writes that "such names should simply be changed under established procedure." First of all, the euphony of surnames is a matter of taste, and second, it is incomprehensible

why, say, the dramatist Pogodin, whose name on his passport is Stukalov, should suddenly change his name under established procedure when he, without arguing with Bubennov, is limited by the fact that he has selected the pseudonym "Pogodin," and this situation has suited readers and audiences fine for over twenty years. "Fans of pseudonyms," writes Bubennov, "are always trying to seek out justifications for their strange inclination." It is incomprehensible what justifications Bubennov is speaking of here, since no one intends to justify themselves in any way to him at all.

And if one need seek justification now, then it is only Mikhail Bubennov himself, who has printed a note that is incorrect in its essence and clamorous in form, in which there is a hint of a conceited attempt to teach everything to everyone without putting oneself to the trouble of investigating the essence of the issue itself. It is a shame when such a hint appears in a young and talented writer.

As for the question of the hacks that Bubennov touches on in passing in his note, this has nothing to do with literary pseudonyms. Hackers that get into the press in one way or another in articles and notes are not determined by how they are signed—pseudonym or surname—but by how they are written, and hack articles and notes can appear not as the result of pseudonyms, but as a result of the failure of editors to be exacting.

Signed: Konstantin Simonov (Kirill Mikhaylovich Simonov)

...

#### With the Visor Down...

Mikhail Sholokhov

KOMSOMOLSKAYA PRAVDA, March 8, 1951

Having attentively read through the article of M. Bubennov "Are Literary Pseudonyms Needed Now" in KOMSOMOLSKAYA PRAVDA and the answering note to this article written by K. Simonov in the LITERATURNAYA GAZETA—"On a Certain Note"—I must say in all conscience that I am surprised at the incomprehensible quick-temperedness that Simonov displayed in debating Bubennov and the unfoundedness of the arguments put forth by Simonov in fiercely defending the existence of pseudonyms in literature.

Summing up the "legal basis" for his arguments in defense of pseudonyms, Simonov begins with references to Soviet copyright law in which it is stated that "only the author has the right to decide whether a work will be published under the real name of the author, under a pseudonym or anonymously." But Simonov does not mention that copyright law was legislated twenty five years ago and that it is obsolete and hardly worth canonizing. An example of the "decrepitude" of the

copyright law, which came out in 1925, is at least the fact that not a single anonymous work has appeared over the last quarter of a century in our literature, and one hardly could appear for reasons that are wholly understandable.

A certain enigma wafts out of the polemical ardor and critical liveliness of K. Simonov. How else to explain albeit the circumstance that Simonov knowingly shuffles the cards, asserting that the question of pseudonyms is a personal matter and not a public one? No, this is a question of public significance, and if it were a personal matter, it would have been enough for LITERATURNAYA GAZETA editor Simonov to have a telephone conversation with Bubennov instead of printing "On a Certain Note" in LITERATURNAYA GAZETA.

Simonov writes "...Mikhail Bubennov cited a whole series of young people of letters whose literary pseudonyms do not suit him, Bubennov." But the issue is not at all feelings of taste and not who likes what and who doesn't. The conversation is not about ice cream, but about literature, about literary life—and accordingly the verb "to like" is inappropriate and in no way reinforces the reasoning of Simonov.

Simonov, with unjustified sharpness accusing Bubennov of a lack of ceremony, being clamorous, conceited, free-and-easy, absurd and more, does not see all of these qualities in his own note, while these qualities of his are hidden in every line and smell quite strongly. By way of example, what is the reason for this "sensible," in Simonov's opinion, advice: "...In my opinion, it would have been more sensible if Bubennov had addressed these comrades (i.e. those who have literary pseudonyms—M.Sh.) with his considerations personally and separately, and not wholesale in the press..." Whomever, but Simonov should be aware that so many of our literati have pseudonyms that Bubennov would live to a ripe old age before he ventured to speak to each one "personally and separately" to express his considerations on pseudonyms.

Consciously desiring to take the reader further from the essence of the issue, Simonov as it were accuses Bubennov of not including in his list famous writers that have pseudonyms. But Bubennov's article is not discussing those who long ago selected this or that invented name for themselves and are well known to the Soviet reader under that name, Bubennov does not make an attempt to wipe out their pseudonyms. The discussion concerns the fact that the young people of our day entering the world of letters do not need this outmoded "tradition." And it seems to me that Bubennov puts the question correctly when he says that it does not become young literati to be ashamed of even disharmonious names of their fathers and grandfathers and to seek contrived euphonic names for themselves to replace them.

In the end, the fact that the known presence of newly minted possessors of pseudonyms engenders irresponsibility and impunity in the literary environment is also

correctly stated in Bubennov's article. Quasi-literary types and "house-dogs" that easily switch their pseudonyms five times a year and with such striking ease, in the event of failure changing professions from man of letters to furrier or watchmaker, inflict enormous harm to literature, corrupting our healthy youth who are pouring into the channel of mighty Soviet literature in a broad stream.

Bubennov is not lecturing anyone and doesn't want to. The very title of his article entirely removes the accusation that Simonov is trying to ascribe to him. And as for conceit and clamoring, those desirous of it could learn this well from Simonov. Here is one of his phrases at the end of the note, addressed to Bubennov: "It is a shame when such a hint appears in a young and talented writer." Such a lordly, scornful and patronizing burden to bear! It would be curious to know when and from whom Simonov obtained a passport to veneration and immortality? Should we have signed him among the literary "veterans" sooner?

Who is Simonov defending? What is he defending? You don't get it at once...

One must debate honestly, looking the opponent directly in the eye. But Simonov squints. He lowers the visor and tightens the strap on his chin. That is why his speech is incomprehensible and why it does not strike a sympathetic chord with the readers.

...

#### More on a Certain Note

LITERATURNAYA GAZETA, March 10, 1951

Writer Mikhail Sholokhov has come out in KOMSOMOLSKAYA PRAVDA (No 55) in defense of the note by Mikhail Bubennov "Are Literary Pseudonyms Needed Now?" (KOMSMOLSKAYA PRAVDA, No 47) that was subjected to criticism on my part in LITERATURNAYA GAZETA (No 27).

A few brief remarks on that score.

One. There is no need to discuss the rightness or wrongness of literary pseudonyms in the newspaper, in my opinion, since the selection or failure to select a literary name for oneself is the personal matter of the writer. It was the aim of my brief reply to Bubennov to emphasize that.

Two. Sholokhov writes: "Who is Simonov protecting? What is he protecting? One doesn't get it at once..." I think that it is understandable, but out of respect for the name of Sholokhov, I can explain it again. I came out to defend writers who wish to select literary names for themselves from false accusations of chameleonism. Sholokhov writes that Bubennov speaks only of "the youth of our times entering the field of letters," and does

not "make an attempt to destroy the pseudonyms" of famous writers. Sholokhov has read Bubennov inattentively. Bubennov links all literary pseudonyms together with efforts to "hide from society" and with a "distinctive chameleonism." He writes that "the time has come to put an end to pseudonyms once and for all." In my opinion, neither the venerable Pogodin, who chose a literary name for himself twenty years ago, nor the young Maltsev, who chose his five years ago, deserve absurd reproaches for chameleonism.

Three. I feel it is incorrect and insulting to our literature to link, both in the note of Bubennov and the note of Sholokhov, the issue of literary pseudonyms of writers and the issue of fighting "individual hacks" and "quasi-literary types and house-dogs."

Four. Sholokhov sees a "lordly scorn" in my sentence addressed to Bubennov: "It is a shame that such a hint appears in a young and talented writer." I retain the impression that Bubennov is talented and is young as a writer. Seeing nothing offensive in this, I include myself among young writers, together with Bubennov, who have much to learn from many, including from such a master of literature as Mikhail Sholokhov. But one thing I would not like to learn from Sholokhov is the rudeness and the strange efforts to stun another writer which can be detected in note, suddenly written on a private score after five years of complete silence in the discussion of all the urgent problems of literature. My profound respect for the talent of Sholokhov is such that I acknowledge that I at first doubted his signature under the essentially incorrect and insultingly rude note. I deeply regret that that signature is there.

Finally, the last. I am sure that the whole imaginary problem of literary pseudonyms raised by Bubennov is a complete fabrication in a search for cheap sensationalism and is of no serious interest to the general reader. It is for namely that reason that I strove to be brief in both of my notes and do not intend to write another word on this topic, even if KOMSOMOLSKAYA PRAVDA once more desires to give its pages over to unworthy attacks in my direction.

Signed: K. Simonov

...

Stalin's irritated tirade against dual names—"What is this emphasized for? Why is this done? Why sow anti-Semitism? Who needs this?"—made a powerful impression on me. On various grounds I have encountered people of different generations in conversations with the opinion that Stalin did not like or, in any case, was not overly fond of Jews; I had also encountered attempts to explain this with many reasons, beginning with his attitude toward the Bund and ending with the recitation of a list of his principal political adversaries whom he had put an end to using various methods at various times, a list headed by Trotsky, Zinoviev, Kamenev and



many other advocates of Trotsky and the leftist opposition. This sounded almost convincing on the one hand, but not so on the other, because the head of the rightist opposition that Stalin had dealt with mercilessly was a choice selection of people with Russian surnames and of Russian origins. As a third aspect, Kaganovich was in our estimation included among the closest comrades-in-arms of Stalin for a long time and was practically called one, remaining a member of the Politburo right up to the end; Mekhlis was an aide to Stalin for many years, during the war years, despite the Kerch failure, which could have cost him his head, and remained a member of the Military Council of various fronts and then became a minister of state control; Litvinov was for fifteen years first effectively and then officially the leader of the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs. In cinematography, where it took shape from the very beginning here that among the major talents in it, the majority were people of Jewish extraction, in the cruelest years—1937 and 1938—the people were affected by repressions way less than in any other sphere of the arts.

It is true that something shifted and began to happen in later years, after the war. The unexpected demise of Mikhoels, which immediately evoked a feeling of mistrust in the official version of it; the disappearance of the Moscow Jewish theater; the postwar arrests among writers who wrote in Hebrew; the appearance of parentheses after pseudonyms in which surnames were reported; the selection of people who appeared in the article "An Antipatriotic Group of Theatrical Critics" with the same trait; various types of connivances by do-gooders acting in this direction, sometimes making or trying to make their own career out of anti-Semitism—all of this, however, did not take shape as something systematic and coming from Stalin. I, for instance, could not believe in this anti-Semitism: it did not coincide with my thoughts about it, with everything that I was reading about it, and seemed somehow absurd, incompatible with the personality of a person who was the head of the world communist movement.

But there was a feeling that something abnormal was going on anyway, that something had changed after the war in this sense. The problems of assimilation or non-assimilation of Jews, which had simply not existed in our youth, in school, at the institute before the war, these problems began to exist. Jews began to be divided into those who felt their gradual assimilation into socialist society to be natural, and those who did not feel that way and resisted it. In these postwar cataclysms, apart from impudently manifested anti-Semitism, there also appeared a concealed but persistent reciprocal Jewish nationalism that sometimes, in some discussions, was classed as a distinctive form of nationalism in the realm of personnel selection—all of this was present both in life and in the consciousness.

But in the face of the almost uncritical attitude toward Stalin that people like me continued to hold in those years, we did not or, in our conversations among

ourselves, address the fact of who was the ringleader of all of these newer and newer manifestations of anti-Semitism. Who was playing first fiddle here, from who was all of this coming and spreading? Who, making use of these or those sentiments or statements of Stalin unfavorable to Jews, the existence of which we assumed, was striving to hyperbolize and utilize all of this? Various people constructed various preconditions, assuming it was this, that or the other one therein, then several immediate members of the Politburo at the time.

And here, speaking on the score of the book of Orest Maltsev and dual surnames, Stalin himself, perhaps to the dissatisfaction of some but the pleasure of the majority of us, unambiguously declared that if there are people who for the second year do not wish to accept for execution, it would seem, the negative attitude clearly expressed by him, Stalin, toward these dual surnames, to this sowing of anti-Semitism, then he himself, Stalin, was not only far from supporting anything of the sort, but felt it necessary to speak out with full clarity in our presence on this score and to dot all the i's, explaining that this did not come from him, that he was dissatisfied with it and that he intended to cut it short.

That is what I thought at the time and continued to think for almost a whole year, until when, after the death of Stalin, I became acquainted with several documents that left no doubt of the fact that in the very latest years of his life, Stalin had a viewpoint on the Jewish question that was directly counter to that which he expressed publicly. It can be completely assumed that he did not like some petty details along the lines of these parentheses after pseudonyms that at a certain moment struck him as stupid or unfortunate, but this had no relation to the essence of the matter. Stalin simply played out a show in front of us, members of the intelligentsia, whose conversations, doubts and confusion he evidently was quite well illuminated about along his own channels, on the theme of catch the thief, giving us to understand that that which he did not like came from somebody else, but not from him himself. This little play was put on en passant. He did not feel it necessary to explain himself for long on this topic with us, and he was correct, because we had become accustomed to believing him from the word go.

I now return, however, to the text of the records that I have put aside for a long while. By the way, as I have discovered, looking now at a copy of my accompanying letter to the remarks of Italian specialists on Yerevan's novel, the Politburo session being discussed took place not in March of 1952, but rather roughly a week before the publication of the list of prizes—February 26.

In concluding the session, Stalin started talking about our drama and expressed his dissatisfaction with it.

"Things are bad in our drama," he said. "They say they like Perventsev's play because it has conflict. They take foreign life, because there are conflicts there. As if there

are no conflicts in our own life. As if there are no riff-raff in our own life. And it turns out that the dramatists feel that they are forbidden to write about negative phenomena. The critics always demand ideals and ideal life from them. And if somebody has something negative appear in his work, they attack him right away. Here Babayevskiy tells in one of his books about some old woman, some ordinary backward woman, or about people that were on a kolkhoz, and then it turns out that these were backward people. And they attack him at once, saying that this cannot be, they demand ideals for us; they say that we cannot show the ugly side of life, when in fact we should show the ugly side of life. They talk like we do not have any riff-raff. They say we have no bad people, but we have bad and nasty people. We have many insincere people, many bad people, and we must fight them, and not to show them is to commit a sin before the truth. If there is an evil, that means it must be treated. We need Gogols. We need Shchedrins. We have many such evils. Many such shortcomings. Everything here is far from all right. Sofronov has expressed the theory that one cannot write good plays: there are no conflicts. How can a play be written without conflict? But we have conflicts. There are conflicts in life. These conflicts should be reflected in drama—otherwise there will be no drama. And if all the negative that playwrights show is attacked, they are intimidated as a result and cease creating conflicts altogether. And without conflicts there is no profundity, there is no drama. Drama is suffering from this. It must be explained so that we have drama. We have evil people, bad people—this must be said to dramatists. And the critics tell them that we do not. That is why we have such poverty in drama."

March 31, 1979

This concludes my record of the time. These were the last words that I heard from Stalin's lips in that comparatively narrow circle in which these sessions transpired.

In re-reading this now, I think that we were living then in a truly difficult time for a person engaged in literature, writing or, as I was, editing *LITERATURNAYA GAZETA* in those years. Over the course of a year or two or three, everything could literally be turned upside down several times and back again: it is enough to compare what was said in the article about antipatriotic critics and the innumerable articles that followed at the time on our theatrical critics with what Stalin was saying about them three years later, in February of 1952. Each time he was right, could not but be right, but the further it went, the more difficult it was to arrange the false logic of this truth. The further it went, the harder it was to reconcile in your head some system anything like a unified one, what he demanded of critics and men of letters, what he was saying about the necessity of truth in life, what happened right there around the attempts to speak of this truth in life. The fact that he sometimes selected at his own initiative really correct works for the conferring of a prize, as it was with Panova, or Nekrasov, or Kazakevich, the fact that with his support, works were

approved for a prize that were glaringly far from anything like the truth in life, such works as "The Struggle for Peace" by Panferov and his "In the Land of the Believers" as well as many others in the same spirit, that could not be made to fit into a system.

Was I thinking about that at the time? I was in the later years of Stalin's life. Not with the same categorical nature of my opinions, of course, quite the contrary, with internally genuine attempts to understand his logic, explain his opinions by this or that political necessity. But my brain was sometimes exhausted from these attempts to make the incompatible compatible in its own way.

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My last entry about Stalin is dated March 16, 1953, that is, several days after his death. How many days, to be completely honest, it is difficult for me to say. It is possible that the imprint of state secrecy lies on this, I allow that Stalin had died at once, and did not fight for life for several days in a coma. The bulletins, from a medical viewpoint, drew an unreliable picture from the very first day. It can be assumed that it was considered necessary to stretch out for several days in the minds of the majority of the people the shattering novelty that there was no Stalin. I assume that we were brought along for a few days that he would be gone very soon. Maybe I am wrong, and all was as it was written in the bulletins, but the idea that it could have been as I think now will not leave. I am also not completely sure just how Stalin died. Was he really seized by a stroke in the loneliness to which he had doomed himself, and found unconscious several hours later lying on the floor? Or did Beria hasten his end with his own hand?

This could be assumed for several reasons at once.

The last six months of his life, especially those connected with the so-called Mingrel affair, Stalin had palpably distanced Beria from himself, although he did it, apparently, inconsistently, not completely, perhaps exaggerating his own possibilities at that moment, some of which had already been blocked by Beria. In this situation Beria, of course, had a vested interest in the fastest possible end to Stalin.

A second basis for such reflections is associated with the fact that over the span of several years, it was namely Beria more than anyone else who could get through to Stalin not only at his will, but evidently also in spite of it.

A third basis. All of what we thought about Beria that became clear in June of 1953 with his attempt to seize power for himself also suggests the possibility that the first step toward this was the elimination of Stalin—either the direct elimination or under the guise of coming to him to help.

All of these assumptions are the result of many years of reflection, not so much on these secrets themselves as to a much greater extent on that brief interval of our history overall.

But at the time, in March of 1953, all of this had not yet come into my head, as my entries testify:

The last session of the 19th Party Congress. The results of the election to the Central Committee and the inspectional commission have already been announced, and after this Voroshilov once again gave the floor to the foreign delegates attending the congress, one after the other. After several days' absence from the very beginning, Stalin was seated with the presidium on this, the last day. Everyone in the hall tensely waited for what they had been discussing amongst themselves yesterday, and today before the beginning of the session—will Stalin speak? If so, how and on what issue? Maybe he would close the congress?

The session meanwhile proceeded at its own pace, and doubts arose from the fact that it kept going on and on: maybe Stalin will not speak at all? Voroshilov gave the floor to Koplenig; then when he was leaving the podium to applause and sitting down in his place, Voroshilov paused briefly and said, "The greetings from the delegations of the fraternal communist parties have concluded." And then he announced without a pause, "The floor is granted to Comrade Stalin."

The hall rose and clapped. Stalin got up from behind the presidium table, walked around the table and with a hearty and almost waddling gait he did not walk, but almost ran to the rostrum. He put sheets of paper in front of him that it seems to me he had been holding when he was walking to the rostrum, and he began to speak—calmly and unhurriedly. He waited out the applause that the hall greeted each paragraph with the same calm and unhurriedness. At one point the audience interrupted his speech in such a way that if he had continued it from the word where it had been interrupted by applause, the form of one of the carefully constructed paragraphs would have been violated. Stalin stopped, waited for the end of the applause and began again not from where he had been interrupted by applause, but higher up, from the first word of the phrase that ended with the words about the flag: "There is nobody else to raise it higher."

At the very end of his speech, Stalin for the first time raised his voice just a little, saying "Hail to our fraternal parties! Let the leaders of the fraternal parties live and be healthy! Hail peace among peoples!" After this he made a long pause and said the following phrase: "Down with the warmongers!" He did not pronounce it the same way as other orators probably would—raising his voice on this last phrase. On the contrary, on this phrase he lowered his voice and said it quietly and disdainfully, making a gesture of calm disdain with his left hand at the

same time as if brushing away or pushing off these warmongers he was recalling somewhere to the side, then he turned and, walking slowly up the steps, returned to his place.

After this I had occasion to see Stalin only twice: at a dinner that the Central Committee gave for members of the foreign delegations of the fraternal communist countries, and at the last plenum of the Central Committee in whose work Stalin took part.

Here I leave my records in order to explain and relate some of the circumstances that are for me personally linked with this last paragraph.

I was among the guests with a ticket for the last session of the 19th Party Congress, with the exception, of course, of the closed part at which the new composition of the Central Committee was elected. The evening before I had been called at home by the writer Babayevskiy, who had completely unexpectedly congratulated me for being selected as a candidate to the Central Committee. Had someone else called me, I would not have believed it at all, considering it a prank and roundly cursing the caller, but Babayevskiy was a delegate to the congress, a person with whom I was not very close, and I had no grounds to disbelieve him. I thanked him for his congratulations, called an acquaintance of mine who was a delegate to the congress to find out from him whether this was true, and having become convinced that it was, I thought that I had obviously been selected as a Central Committee candidate member as the editor-in-chief of LITERATURNAYA GAZETA. The guess was correct, as it proved later. At the same time as me, for the first time in their lives, Tvardovskiy—at the time editor of NOVYY MIR—and Surkov—at the time editor of OGONEK—were selected for the inspectional commission of the Central Committee. For some reason, it seemed to me that all three cases were at the initiative of Stalin, although I could be wrong.

At the dinner given by the Central Committee in honor of the delegations from foreign communist parties and which took place nearly on the same evening the congress ended, I turned out to be sitting next to Georgiy Konstantinovich Zhukov, elected a candidate member of the Central Committee like me. There was no cause here to doubt that it was at the initiative of Stalin—there could be no other reasons at the time. Many were pleased, and at the same time surprised, at this change in the fortunes of Zhukov. I was probably less surprised than others, because I remembered what Stalin had been saying as early as two years earlier about Zhukov in connection with the discussion of Kazakevich's novel "Spring on the Oder." Now, during this dinner, sitting next to Zhukov, I not only recalled that discussion about him that had taken place at the Politburo, but also felt I had the right to relate it to Georgiy Konstantinovich. I felt through his unchanging restraint that he was in a good mood that evening. I think that his election to the Central Committee was unexpected for him. The



impression it had made on him was thus all the stronger. But his feeling of personal dignity did not permit him to say a word about this topic, which doubtless troubled him most of all, over the several hours we were sitting together.

The dinner went on and Voroshilov made a toast to him. And Stalin, sitting at the head of the table but a little further from the center of it, socialized with those those sitting nearby—one right alongside him and the other not far away—(illegible—L.L.) and Toretz. His attention to the both of them was even felt to be emphasized, and this was obviously no accident—that is how it seemed to me, in any case.

The Central Committee Plenum—the first I had attended in my life and the only one at which I saw Stalin—took place a day later, October 16. I did not extend my entry on the plenum of March 1953 for many reasons. But I will first cite—such as it is—my brief entry at the time, and then I will decipher some elements of it from memory that today, twenty seven years later, it will be less of a sin to decipher than to consign to oblivion.

Here is the entry in its primordial form:

Naturally, I do not have the right to write down everything that transpired at the Central Committee Plenum, but without touching on the issues that came up there, I want to record some details nonetheless.

When the plenum began at exactly the designated moment, all were already sitting in their places, and Stalin along with the remaining members of the Politburo, coming from the rear door, began approaching the presidium table while those assembled in Sverdlovsk Hall applauded him. Stalin entered with a very business-like, serious and concentrated face and, looking quickly around the hall, made a very brief but imperious gesture of the hand—from his chest in our direction. And this gesture expressed both the fact that he understood our feelings for him and that we should understand that this was not necessary here, this was a Central Committee Plenum, where business should be conducted.

One of the members of the Central Committee, standing at the podium, said in concluding his speech that he was a devoted pupil of Comrade Stalin. Stalin, listening to this speech very attentively, sitting behind the orators at the presidium, gave the brief reply that "We are all pupils of Lenin."

Speaking himself, Stalin, in discussing the necessity of firmness and fearlessness, started talking about Lenin, about the fearlessness that Lenin had displayed in 1918, what an unbelievably grave situation it was then and how powerful the enemies were.

"And what about Lenin?" asked Stalin. "Lenin—re-read what he said and what he wrote at that time. An unbelievably grave situation resounded at the time, resounded, and he feared no one. Resounded."

Stalin repeated two or three times in a row this word "Resounded!"

Then, in connection with a question that had come up at the plenum, Stalin, speaking about his obligation, said, "Once it is entrusted to me, I do it. And not just so that it is recorded for me. I was not raised that way," saying the latter quite sharply.

What had happened and what was behind this brief entry I made in 1953? I will try to recall and explain it to the extent of my understanding.

April 2, 1979

I do not want to sin and try to resurrect the details of what happened at the plenum that I remembered but then did not record. I will relate only what has really been engraved in my memory and remained there as a grave and even tragic recollection.

The entire plenum lasted, it seems to me, two or a little over two hours, of which roughly an hour and a half was given over to Stalin's speech, and the rest to speeches by Molotov and Mikoyan and the elections to the executive organs of the Central Committee that concluded the plenum. As far as I remember, while Stalin was speaking the plenum was run by Malenkov, and the rest of the time by Stalin himself. Almost immediately after the beginning, Malenkov gave the floor to Stalin and he, walking out from behind the Presidium table, came down to the podium a few steps below the Presidium table and in the center of it. He spoke sternly and without humor from beginning to end, had no papers in front of him on the podium and during the speech looked at the audience attentively, fixedly and somehow gravely, as if he were trying to penetrate to what these people sitting in front of and behind him were thinking. And both the tone of his speech and the way he spoke, riveting his eyes on the audience—all of this brought all of those seated there to a kind of numbness, one element of which numbness I myself felt. His speech was mainly reduced (not textually, but in its course of thought) to the fact that he was old, the time was coming when others would have to continue what he was doing, that the world situation was complex and the fight with the capitalist camp would be difficult and the most dangerous thing in this fight was to falter, be frightened, retreat, capitulate. This was the most important thing that he wanted not just to say, but to inculcate into those present, which was in turn connected with the theme of old age and his possible departure from this life.

This was all said rigidly, and in places even more than rigidly, almost fiercely. Maybe at such moments in his speech there were constituent elements of gamesmanship

and calculation, but behind them was felt a genuine alarm not devoid of a tragic inside story. It was namely in connection with the danger of retreat, fear and capitulation that Stalin appealed to Lenin in the phrases that I have already cited in my entry for the time. Now the discussion essentially concerned him himself, Stalin, who could be departing, and those who could remain after him. But he did not talk about himself, instead of himself he spoke of Lenin, about his fearlessness in the face of any circumstances.

The chief feature of Stalin's speech was the fact that he did not feel it necessary to speak in general about courage or fear, determination and capitulation. Everything he was talking about he linked directly to two members of the Politburo who were sitting there, in this hall, behind his back, two meters from him, people about whom I, for instance, least of all expected to hear what Stalin was saying about them.

At first this whole roll call of accusations and suspicions, accusations of instability, of a lack of firmness, suspicions of cowardice and capitulation rained down on Molotov. This was so unexpected that I at first did not believe my ears, thinking that I had misheard or did not understand. It turned out to be true. It followed from Stalin's speech that the person most suspected by him of an ability to capitulate, the person most dangerous for him in that sense that evening, at that plenum, was Molotov, none other than Molotov. He talked about Molotov for a long time and without mercy, citing some examples I cannot recall of his incorrect actions connected chiefly with the period when he, Stalin, was on vacation, while Molotov had remained behind and had incorrectly resolved some issues that should have been resolved otherwise. What sort I do not remember, do not recall, probably partly because Stalin was speaking for an audience that was better acquainted with the political nuances associated with these issues than I. I did not always understand what was being talked about. And, secondly, probably because the accusations he was setting forth were so undefined, unclear and uncertain, in any case, that is how it remained in my perception.

So I did not understand what Molotov was guilty of, I only understood that Stalin was accusing him of a series of actions in the postwar period, accusing him in anger so hot, it would seem, that it was connected with a direct danger to Molotov, with a direct threat to draw the final conclusions that, in remembering the past, could be expected of Stalin. Stalin essentially attached the main substance of his speech, the whole system of accusations of cowardice and capitulation and the challenges to Leninist courage and inflexibility with the figure of Molotov: he was accused of all of the sins that could not exist in the party if time were to take its course and Stalin ceased to be at the head of the party.

With all of Stalin's anger, sometimes even given over to a lack of restraint in what he was saying, there was his characteristic iron construction. The same construction

was also present in the next portion of his speech, devoted to Mikoyan, shorter but in some of its nuances perhaps even more spiteful and disrespectful.

There was a terrible silence in the hall. I did not look at my neighbors, but I saw the four members of the Politburo sitting behind Stalin at the rostrum from where he spoke: their tense and immobile faces had turned to stone. They, as we, did not know where and when Stalin would stop, whether he would step beyond Molotov and Mikoyan to someone else. They did not know what remained to be heard about the others and, perhaps, themselves. The faces of Molotov and Mikoyan were white and dead. These faces remained just as white and dead when Stalin, having finished, returned, sat at the table and they—first Molotov, then Mikoyan—went down to the rostrum where Stalin had just been standing, and there—Molotov longer, Mikoyan more briefly—tried to explain to Stalin their actions and deeds, justifying themselves, saying to him that it was not so, that they had never been cowards, never capitulated and did not fear new clashes with the camp of capitalism and would not capitulate to it.

After the severity with which Stalin had spoken of them both, after the ferocity that had sounded in his speech at many places, both of the speakers seemed to be giving the last testimony of the accused, who although denying all of the blame placed on them, could hardly hope for a change in their fate already decided by Stalin. It was a strange feeling that I remember from that time: they spoke, but it seemed to me that these were not people whom I had seen many times and up close, but white masks on these faces that looked very much like the faces themselves and at the same time were somehow completely different, not even living. I do not know whether I have expressed it precisely enough, but my feeling was such, and I am not exaggerating it in hindsight.

I do not know why Stalin chose in his last speech at a Central Committee plenum namely Molotov and Mikoyan as the main targets of his distrust. The fact that he clearly wanted to compromise the both of them, diminish them, remove the aura from some of the most historic figures after himself, was undoubted. He wanted to diminish them, especially Molotov, bring to naught the aura that Molotov had, he was, notwithstanding the fact that in recent years he had been essentially removed from affairs to a considerable extent, notwithstanding the fact that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had for several years been run directly by Vyshinskiy, notwithstanding the fact that his wife was in prison—notwithstanding all of this, for many, many people—the wider circle you take, the more there are of them—the name of Molotov was said or remembered right after the name of Stalin. That is evidently what Stalin did not want. He was striving to make everyone gathered at the plenum, all the old and new members and candidate members of the Central Committee, all the old and new members of the executive organs of the Central Committee that were yet to be elected, feel and understand this. For some

reason he did not want Molotov to remain, should something happen to him, the first figure of the state and the party. And his speech conclusively ruled out such a possibility.

I will allow that, knowing Molotov, he felt that he could not fulfill the first role in the party and the state. But he struck Molotov at exactly the point, at exactly the place, that in the consciousness of the people was the strongest "aye" in evaluating Molotov. He hit below the belt, he hit at the conception that had taken shape for many that come what may, Molotov was nonetheless his closest comrade-in-arms. He hit at the conception that Molotov was the most solid, the most inflexible follower of Stalin. He struck, accusing him of capitulation and the possibility of cowardice and capitulation, right where no one had ever suspected Molotov. He struck traitorously and purposefully, struck by knocking off his possible successors. That is the main thing that remains in my mind in connection with that speech.

And something else. I do not remember whether it was in this one speech or before it that Molotov and Mikoyan were allowed to speak, or after it in another, brief speech preceding the elections to the executive organs of the Central Committee—I am even afraid to assert that there was a second speech, possibly, everything was said at various points in the first speech—Stalin, standing at the rostrum and looking at the audience, started speaking of his old age and about the fact that he could not execute all of the duties that had been entrusted to him. He could continue to bear his obligations as Chairman of the Council of Ministers and he could execute his obligations in leading, as before, the sessions of the Politburo, but as general secretary he could no longer conduct the sessions of the Central Committee secretariat. He thus requested that he be freed from this last position and that we honor his request. Roughly in those words, almost textually, this was said. But matters are not words alone. Stalin, in saying these words, looked around the hall, while behind him sat the Politburo as Malenkov, who ran the session while Stalin was speaking, stood at the table. And on Malenkov's face I saw a terrible expression—not so much fright, no, not fright—but rather an expression that a person could have when he realizes more clearly than everyone else or more clearly, in any case, than many others the mortal danger that hung over everyone and that the others did not realize: one could not agree with this request of Comrade Stalin's, it could not be agreed to, that he set aside this one, the least of his positions in authority, it could not be. The face of Malenkov, his gestures, his expressively raised hands were a direct appeal to all of those present to reject Stalin's request immediately and decisively. And then, drowning out the words that had already sounded behind Stalin—"No, please stay!"—or something in that spirit, the hall rang with the words "No! It cannot be! Please stay! Please take back your request!" I will not endeavor to cite all of the words and exclamations that there were at that moment, but in general the audience understood and, perhaps, the majority of them

understood before I did. It seemed to me at the first second that all of this was natural: Stalin would chair the Politburo, would be chairman of the Council of Ministers, and the General Secretary of the Central Committee would be someone else, as it was under Lenin. But what I did not at first understand that many did at once or almost at once, while Malenkov as the chairman at the moment had the greatest responsibility, and in the event of it the blame, understood at once that Stalin had no intention of renouncing the post of general secretary, that this was a test, a sounding out of the attitude of the plenum toward the question he had posed—so, were they, sitting behind him in the presidium or in front of him in the hall, ready to let him, Stalin, out of the post of general secretary, because he was old, tired and could not bear all of this third obligation of his?

When the hall rang out and shouted that Stalin should stay in the post of general secretary and lead the Central Committee Secretariat, the face of Malenkov, I remember this very well, was the face of a man for whom a direct, real and mortal danger has just passed, because it was namely he, giving the reporting speech at the party congress and in practice leading the majority of the sessions of the Central Committee Secretariat and serving as the chair for this session of the plenum, that would have been the natural candidate for the third post of Comrade Stalin, which he supposedly wanted to leave due to old age and tiredness, in the event of another resolution of the issue. And just let Stalin feel that there, behind his back, or in front of him, before his eyes, there were advocates of satisfying his request, I think the first who would have answered for this with his head would have been Malenkov; how it would have turned out in general is difficult to imagine.

I do not now remember who finally announced the composition of the executive organs on which the members of the Central Committee had to vote at the end of the plenum—Stalin himself or Malenkov. I remember only the reply of Stalin on the score of Andreyev, who was not a member or candidate member of the Central Committee, that he had withdrawn from affairs and could not work actively anymore. Something in that spirit. The composition of the Presidium, which was elected in place of the Politburo, was unexpected for many, certainly for me as well. The fact that a Presidium would be elected instead of the Politburo was already known from the newly approved charter. The fact that the Presidium would have twenty five people and the former Politburo would be less than half the size of the Presidium was unexpected.

In the report on the first day of the congress it was written thus: "Seven o'clock P.M. Appearance at the podium of Comrade Stalin and his faithful comrades-in-arms Comrades Molotov, Malenkov, Voroshilov, Bulganin, Beria, Kaganovich, Khrushchev, Andreyev, Mikoyan. Kosygin greeted by prolonged applause by the



delegates. All rise... At the behest of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, the congress is opened by the inaugural speech of M.V. Molotov."

Now Andreyev was missing from the former members of the Politburo, while Kosygin was a candidate member of the Presidium. The Central Committee Secretariat was also comprised unprecedentedly broadly: ten people. It did not enter my head at the time, but I have thought many times since that Stalin obviously wanted to create freedom of maneuver for himself within the Presidium and the Secretariat. Maybe he had more far-reaching plans as well that, it seemed to him, would be simpler to fulfill with an expanded composition for the Presidium and Secretariat. But I was not thinking about that then, I was simply surprised at some personnel changes. My chief surprise was associated with the fact that despite the ferocious speech of Stalin directed at Molotov and Mikoyan, they were both on the Presidium—this elicited a sign of relief from me. But after this there occurred something that was later not as widely known: Stalin, although it was not in the new charter of the party, proposed splitting off from the Presidium a Presidium Buro, that is, essentially a Politburo under a different name. And now neither Molotov nor Mikoyan of the old members of the Politburo were part of the new composition of the Presidium.

Going to LITERATURNAYA GAZETA after the plenum, I related the creation of the Presidium Buro to my deputy, Boris Sergeyevich Ryurikov. We both thought that all of this would be in the press. But the TASS dispatches that came to the editors did not report the creation of the Presidium Buro. It thus remained unknown, and on the day of Stalin's death, when we appeared at the plenum of the Central Committee at which the new organs of power were formed one and a half or two hours after Stalin's death, at the Presidium table sat the Buro elected under Stalin plus Molotov and Mikoyan and minus Stalin himself. It was thus evidently his own personal decision, made at the plenum and later seemingly simply ignored. And only in the decree of the joint session of the CPSU Central Committee, Council of Ministers and Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet was there a clause that mentioned in passing that the Buro had existed for some time, in the section in the Presidium of the CPSU Central Committee and the secretaries of the CPSU Central Committee, the first clause looked like this: "It is recognized as essential to have in the CPSU Central Committee, in place of two Central Committee organs—the Presidium and the Buro of the Presidium—a single organ, the Presidium of the CPSU Central Committee, as stipulated by the party charter." The next clause was the reduction of the Presidium to the former complement of the Politburo. It looked like this: "For the purpose of greater efficiency in leadership, the composition of the Presidium is defined as ten members and four candidate members." Instead of twenty five and eleven, as it was after the 19th Congress—I add this myself.

The four and a half months that passed between the last Central Committee plenum that Stalin participated in and his death were difficult and strange ones. Everything seemingly took its course: the International Stalin Prizes for the Defenders of Peace were conferred, a plenum of the Soviet Committee for the Defense of Peace was held, problems in the study of Mayakovskiy were discussed, and LITERATURNAYA GAZETA continued its literary life. At the same time, the trial of Slanski and the others took place in Czechoslovakia. I knew Slanski, he passed through the front with me after the Slovak uprising from Tatr in places occupied by the 4th Ukrainian Front, which I was with at the time, and I saw him that first day. He was with the future minister of industry, the Social-Democrat Laushman. They related how Jan Sverm had died in their arms during this escape from encirclement, unable to bear the rigors of the march. This was the winter of 1945. Now, in November of 1952, Slanski was accused of the death of Sverm and of ties with the Jewish "Joint" nationalist organization, of which he was supposedly an agent. Among those who appeared at this trial was a former political worker of Svoboda's corps, later the deputy minister of Czechoslovakia during the time Svoboda was minister. I had argued with this person—Bedrzhikh Rayntsin—quite bitterly about my play "Under the Chestnuts of Prague," which he did not like; his position struck me being as too didactical. Knowing the attitude of Svoboda toward him, knowing how highly Svoboda valued his participation in the battles of the corps, I never imagined that this person could prove to be a spy. In December, flying through Prague to London, I met a dismayed Jan Drdu at the airport, who told me that Svoboda himself was either in prison or under house arrest. This literally shook me, because Svoboda had been among those people in whom I believed and continued to believe without reservation at all times.

I flew to Prague and from there via Paris to London with Fedin. Several days earlier, if not on the eve of our departure, Vladimir Semenovich Lebedev, at the time working in the Central Committee apparatus, now deceased, told me in a meeting that a decision had been made to designate me one of the two editors-in-chief of PRAVDA. I did not even understand at first what he was talking about, but it turned out that the idea, it must be assumed, originated with Stalin to have two editors-in-chief of PRAVDA and that I should become one of them. Lebedev said that this had been decided and was being formulated, and by the time I returned, it would be an assignment. I had no reason to disbelieve him, although all of this was very strange. I could not understand how it could be—why two editors-in-chief of PRAVDA? This flattered and frightened me. By the way, after my return from England, no one returned to this plan and this conversation, as if it had never been. Evidently it was one of Stalin's unexpected ideas that he later forgot and that turned to dust—and thank God it did.

In England we met with a number of English writers who had visited us not long before. At a reception at the home of the liberally inclined English writer Naomi Mitchison,

Fedin and I were approached by Alexander Wert, opening his arms wide. To see him here after the Czechoslovak trial, when he was mentioned as one of the links between "Joint" and Slanski, was something of a shock. But he, coming up to us, started saying for all to hear, almost shouting, "Fedin! Simonov! You know me, I was a war correspondent with you, you know that very well. You know that I am writing a book in which I do not agree with much of what you do. But I swear to you that I knew no Slanski, I did not dream about any Slanski, I never dealt with him in any way, I have no conception of him. Tell them that in Moscow. Let me be bad, let me be unwelcome anywhere, let them accuse me as a journalist of anything they want, but tell them that so they do not consider me to be what I never was."

The situation, it must be said, was not the easiest, the more so as everything about Wert at that moment evoked a feeling of trust in what he was saying, while what had happened in the trial in Czechoslovakia evoked the opposite feeling.

We returned to Moscow by New Year, and on January 13 the newspapers printed a TASS report about the doctors' plot, a terrible report reminding us of the worst times of 1937 and 1938 and the sort of accusations of Pletnev and others of murder or being accomplices to the murder of Ordzhonikidze, Gorky and Kuybyshev. In the role of victims now were Zhdanov and Shcherbakov, and the murderer doctors turned out to be agents of this same "Joint," they all had Jewish surnames, although it is true that several doctors with Russian surnames were joined to them later. Among these physicians with Jewish surnames was a person whom I knew very well personally—Professor Vovsi. He had treated me during the war and after it, being the chief therapist of the Red Army. I simply could not believe in his guilt. And in general all of this did not elicit belief, it seemed monstrous and strange somehow. When a week later a report appeared of the awarding of the Order of Lenin to physician Lidiya Timashuk, to whom the government expressed its gratitude for help in unmasking the doctors' plot, this whole story looked even stranger and more suspicious. The wave of anti-Semitism rolled on, in many cases not free of the direct settling of all sorts of personal scores—recent and not so recent.

April 4, 1979

In the second half of January, February and the first half of March, including the week and a half after the death of Stalin, an oppressive atmosphere was created around the matter of the doctors' plot. It seemed that something terrible was impending, a repeat of 1937 and 1938. Even the death of Stalin did not defuse this atmosphere, I can say this relying on my own impressions.

There was complete confusion in the mind. On the one hand, I well remembered how quite recently in my presence Stalin came out against anti-Semitism, I heard this with my own ears. And suddenly these murderer

doctors, this list with primarily Jewish surnames, this exposure in connection with "Joint," all of the muck that came up from the bottom around this.

The doctors' plot—something more terrible, it seems, could not be contrived. Everything starting with this formulation was intentionally calculated for an enormous resonance, for the fact that people, albeit just a little given to this, albeit only to a certain extent believing it, would become people with minds out of phase, people fearing for their own lives daily, their own health and, even more terrible, for the health of their children. In general there was a feeling that the consequences of this could prove to be truly immense. I mentally asked myself: just what had happened? What of Stalin? What, had he consciously deceived us when he spoke the complete opposite of what was being done (here there can be no doubt) with his direct instructions and permission now, or was he being candid both then and now? And were those terrible and timidly oozing rumors about some upheavals in his psyche true? I couldn't believe this, and it was terrible to believe. Even the idea of disruptions in the psyche could not be combined with the impressions that remained with me from the meetings, all of this could not be accommodated in the mind. Neither the one nor the other.

And so much of all kinds of muck floated to the surface over this time! But perhaps in order not to digress too far, I will begin back at the beginning and finish from there.

Over these first few months of 1953, Aleksey Aleksandrovich Surkov, who had been at the Writers' Union in earlier times, as I had, filling in for the long- or quite long-absent Fadeyev, twice related to me conversations with workers in the Central Committee apparatus regarding letters that had some connection with me. It must be said that Surkov profoundly and organically despised and hated both anti-Semitism as a phenomenon and anti-Semites as its personal carriers, did not hide this and in his sharp rebuff to everything connected with it was more consistent and bolder than myself or Fadeyev.

In the first instance he told me in a rage about the content of a letter that had been shown to him at the Central Committee apparatus as the acting head of the Writers' Union. This letter, addressed to the Central Committee, was not anonymous, it was signed by one of those familiar people who, having won no small honor in the war years, makes use of the literary record of his heroic deeds made by others in order to get into the Writers' Union. I will not state here the name of this person, which I found out from Surkov, who did not feel it necessary to hide it from me. He died a year or two afterward—an accidental death nasty in its extreme uncertainty—so good luck to him. But the letter itself merits a brief retelling even today, so many years later, since it typifies a certain element of the atmosphere of the times, when a person, not an anonymous one but one

with a famous name, decides to engage in excavations of an anti-Semitic nature to such a depth that had been conceived of before, perhaps, only by fascists.

In his letter, he wanted to direct the attention of the Central Committee agitation and propaganda department to the fact that the pandering to Jews and the sway of Jews with which the activity of the LITERATURNAYA GAZETA that I headed was connected could be explained by my own Jewish extraction. As he revealed, I was in fact not Simonov, but Simanovich, born in a Jewish family and the son of a tavern-keeper on the estate of Countess Obolenskaya, later taking me in for education and adoption. He evidently considered this information to be sufficiently serious that he sent it to the Central Committee and signed his own name. Surkov, as I have already mentioned, spoke of this in a rage, and I at first started laughing when I heard of it. I laughed because my first reaction was the idea that I would tell this to my mother, who had no estate with a tavern-keeper with the name of Simanovich, and had no estate at all, and was not Countess Obolenskaya, because there were no Count Obolenskiys, there were only Prince Obolenskiys. But what is true is true, she was born Princess Obolenskaya, married Colonel Simonov before World War I and bore him a son Kirill, who to her great dissatisfaction signed his works as Konstantin Simonov. And my mother really did laugh terribly hard at all this. But Surkov did not share my initial reaction.

"You're mistaken to laugh," he told me. "Better think about how it comes to this, that such letters are written to the Central Committee, what the situation is behind this, when a person decides to write such letters."

And he was right, of course—despite the ludicrous form, as a sign of the times this letter had a serious side as well. Surkov finally also started laughing anyway when I told him why I had started laughing at first. I thanked him for the information, and he only angrily and sadly waved his hand.

"How good would I be if I hadn't told you this?" I understood from his expression that someone he had been speaking with had evidently not recommended telling me this, and Surkov had done it in spite of someone's advice.

At the very end of January, when the LITERATURNAYA GAZETA was printing either the last or the penultimate material on the discussion that had taken place among writers called "Basic Issues in Studying the Work of V.V. Mayakovskiy," Surkov was once again called to the same place as the first time in connection with the fact that someone did not like something in these reports. And in connection with this, the dissatisfactions addressed to me both as the editor of the newspaper and as the practical leader of this discussion, Vladimir Semenovitch Kruzhkov, working at the time in the department of agitation and propaganda, whom although I had known for quite a few years, I could not

say anything either good or bad with my hand over my heart, with such a confusion, probably, with the unexpectedness of the fact what he had found out and intended to share with Surkov, told Surkov that they had serious, albeit not fully confirmed, signals that there existed in Moscow a group of individuals in writers' circles that was directly linked with "Joint," headed by none other than Konstantin Simonov. This time Kruzhkov showed Surkov no letters at all, although it must be thought that the serious signals Kruzhkov was talking about were namely letters, and this time most likely anonymous, but the confusion with which Kruzhkov related all of this to Surkov was imprinted in his mind. I do not know what he said to Kruzhkov there, probably with his customary sharpness in such instances was not at a loss for words and said whatever he thought, and to me at the end of the conversation said bitterly and seriously, "Naturally, it is assumed that I will not tell you all of this, and truthfully speaking, I didn't want to say all of this filth, but you need to know it. You need to know that some bastards are digging under you, they want to dig a grave for you at all costs. And take heed, all of this was spoken in all its absurdity with such a serious face that I could not believe my ears."

That is how my second conversation with Surkov ended during those months important to me. There was a third one later, but that was after the death of Stalin, and I will relate that separately.

However terrible, or more precisely, however strange, this seems to me today—it does not remain in my memory namely when, where or under what circumstances, from newspapers or the radio or some other method, how it was that I found out about the government report on Stalin's illness. Everything further that happened in those days was both briefly recorded almost at the same time and was retained in memory. But this was neither preserved nor remembered. I will begin the story of these days directly with my entry made on March 16 of 1953:

A few words about the sorrowful days of March of this year. It is difficult to record this, because it has still not completely sunk in that Stalin is no more, that he has died. There is the feeling that, of course, it has happened, and I know it, and everyone knows it, and at the same time it has still not sunk in yet that Stalin is no more. It seems to me that I will forget nothing, that I cannot forget. It seems that all of the details associated with these days will stay in my memory forever. And it is thus difficult to force myself to record them, difficult to write about how it seems to you, you will never forget just the same. But the memory is a deceptive thing. Details can ebb or can sometime later be re-arranged in the memory in a different order than they occurred, and thus at least some of them must be recorded now, even by mastering oneself.

One of the first feelings that possessed me from the very beginning was a certain persistent reluctance to investigate the details of the bulletins, a reluctance to know and



understand what they signified in medical language. It seemed senseless to discuss the pulse, blood pressure, temperature and all other details of the bulletins, what they meant to the health of a person who was seventy-three years old. I didn't want to think about it myself and I didn't want to discuss it with others, because it seemed that it was impossible to speak of Stalin as just an old man who was suddenly gravely ill. It seemed that the main thing was not all of these medical terms, not all of these details about Stalin's illness, the main thing was something else: would he regain consciousness or not? Most feared of all was to be unconscious, that meant his will could not take part in fighting the disease. It seemed that if he would only regain consciousness, he had such a will that he would survive.

I went to the Kremlin at four o'clock in the afternoon, to the room that housed Stalin's secretariat. Other people, summoned there like me, for one brief matter, arrived silently, removed their coats silently, engaged in the business they were summoned for silently for fifteen or twenty minutes, and then, without exchanging a word, they left.

Here I leave the text of the records of the time. I do not know why I felt it necessary at the time, in writing it down, to skirt in silence the matter we were summoned for. The members and candidate members of the Central Committee that were in Moscow and, perhaps, had already been summoned to Moscow were called to the Kremlin, to Stalin's secretariat, over the space of several hours, possibly along with some other individuals—this I don't know—in order to acquaint them with the bulletins on the state of Stalin's health. The motives for which this was done, it seems to me today, could have been dual ones. First of all, they could have wanted to acquaint a certain circle of individuals with the originals of the bulletins and, second, these original bulletins could have been more detailed than the text that was transmitted to the press. That is most likely what it was, the bulletins were either more detailed or hourly, because if—as I recorded at the time—in order to do what we were summoned for required fifteen or twenty minutes, this meant that it was connected with reading at least several pages.

I return to the text of my entry for March 16, 1953:

I was not left with the feeling that all would remain the way it was: the same path along the Kremlin wall, out from inside it, and the same officer checking documents at the entrance, and the same door, and the same stairs that I had had to go up six times before in recent years. But there was a feeling, in the silence of the people, the quiet of the stairs, the quiet of the corridors, quiet as before but now somehow especially quiet, that there was a sadness in this house.

When I went up the stairs and passed along the corridor, I came first not to the rooms of Stalin's secretariat that I should have gone to, but stopped in at another one, the

same one where sometime in 1947, I had sat along with Fadeyev and Gorbakov and waited ten minutes when Stalin was receiving us—the first time I had ever seen him.

There were tables in the room as before, one of which was in the middle of the room. A person rose and said, "No, today to the left and the next door." I left and, passing through the next door to the neighboring room, recalled that this is where we had sat and waited—two or three times—before the discussions of the Stalin prizes. Then we would sit and talk. Today there was absolute silence in the room, although there were many people in it. The silence was complete and profound. Behind this silence was a feeling that somewhere here, a few rooms away, another corridor, another room, then another room and then somewhere in that room, the dying Stalin was lying in his apartment. And we, sitting silently here, were separated from him just by some corridor and a few doors. And Stalin was lying and could not regain consciousness very close to us, namely in this same building in which we were sitting.

Here I will leave my entry of 1953 again. Now it is quite well known that Stalin had not died in his apartment, in the Kremlin, as was stated in the government reports, but outside the city, as his so-called near dacha. To complain about or be offended by this digression from the truth that was contained in the first government reports today somehow does not come to mind. Evidently the people that put out those reports at the time had or felt they had some state reasons for such deviations from the truth. I think that mentally imagining myself in the place of those people at the time, I can also without difficulty imagine the reasons for both possible cases: in the event that Stalin had lost consciousness and been near death on March 2, and died on the evening of the fifth, in accordance with the reports and medical bulletins; and in the event that, say, he was dead right then on the second, and after that for three days the medical bulletins essentially left no hope of recovery, preparing people for this event, which, whatever your attitude toward Stalin, objectively signified the end of a long period in our history connected with his name.

But truthfully speaking, I am not torn by curiosity today, a quarter of a century later, as to how this dying actually transpired. I have not encountered people who would have related to me with convincing trustworthiness how it actually was, and I do not seek to learn this from people who should have known it but have displayed a reluctance to speak with me about it. It could be one way or the other, but in either case it was of secondary importance to such concepts as the end of an era and the beginning of another.

I return again to my entry for 1953:

March 5, evening. The joint session of the Central Committee, the Council of Ministers and the Supreme Soviet which was later reported in the papers and on the

radio should begin in Sverdlovsk Hall. I came long before the designated hour, about forty minutes, but over half the participants had already gathered in the hall, and ten minutes later all had arrived. Maybe just two or three people appeared less than half an hour before the start. And here were several hundred people, among whom almost all were acquainted with one another, knew each other from work, knew each others' faces from many meetings—several hundred people for forty minutes, and those who came before me even longer, sat in complete silence, awaiting the start. They sat in rows, shoulder to shoulder, they saw each other but no one said a single word to anyone else. No one asked anyone anything. And it seemed to me that not one of those present in the hall even had any need to speak up. There was such a silence in the hall before the very start that, without having spent forty minutes myself in this quiet, I would never have believed that three hundred people sitting close to each other side by side could be so quiet. I will never forget that silence as long as I live.

That is what I wrote at the time. And truly, if not as long as I live, then to this day, when twenty five years have passed since then, I have not forgotten that silence.

And now a few words to supplement what was written at the time.

The first impression: out of the rear doors of Sverdlovsk Hall came in and sat down at the Presidium table not the twenty five people elected to the Presidium under Stalin, but only those that had been on the Presidium Bureau under Stalin—Malenkov, Beria, Kaganovich, Bulganin, Khrushchev, Voroshilov, Saburov and Pervukhin. Besides them, Molotov and Mikoyan, whom Stalin had not included on that Bureau. Stalin's will from the beginning was thus observed in the fact that Saburov and Pervukhin were sitting at the Presidium table; on the other hand, it was repudiated, because the ninth and tenth at the table were Molotov and Mikoyan, whom Stalin had not included on the Presidium Bureau during his life. That is how I formulate it now. The feeling then was perhaps simpler: the old Politburo, to which Pervukhin and Saburov had been added, had entered and sat down.

The entering speech, if memory serves me correctly, was given by Malenkov. It was—not textually but essentially—reduced to the fact that Comrade Stalin continued to fight death, but his condition was so grave that even if he were to conquer death, he would be unable to work for very long. And it was impossible to leave the country without full leadership for such a time. We could not enter an uncertain situation, the international situation did not allow it. It was therefore essential right away, without delay, to form the government and make all the essential appointments associated with this.

After this Malenkov gave the floor to Beria. Beria, coming down to the rostrum, briefly proposed naming Malenkov Chairman of the Council of Ministers. While

this proposal was being voted on, he went back, started back to the Presidium table, while Malenkov started down to the rostrum. They came face to face and passed each other with difficulty in the narrow space. I would add that at the time I thought about this without amusement, without even a hint of it, simply, as sometimes happens, noted by the eyes, it turns out, forever.

Coming down to the rostrum, Malenkov began making the proposals that were all reported the next day in the papers and heard, it seems, earlier on the radio—right after the death of Stalin. Malenkov named Beria the first, and after him Molotov, Bulganin and Kaganovich, among the first four deputies to the chairman of the Council of Ministers. The later proposals were reduced to concentrating power and the principal ministries connected with power in the fewest possible hands. "For the purposes of greater efficiency in leadership," the composition of the Central Committee Presidium and the candidate members of the Central Committee Presidium were reduced by two and a half times, while the members of the Presidium remained the same as had entered and sat down at the table at the beginning of the session. A tendency to concentrate power in the hands of the Presidium of the Council of Ministers, which included included five, that is half, of the members of the Central Committee Presidium, essentially appeared. Only one member of the Presidium—Khrushchev—remained on the Central Committee Secretariat with the directive that he should concentrate on that work. Another member of the Central Committee Presidium—Voroshilov—became Chairman of the Supreme Soviet, and three other members of the Central Committee Presidium—Mikoyan, Saburov and Pervukhin—became ministers but were not part of the Presidium of the Council of Ministers. Behind this distribution of forces was probably the idea of changing the correlation of the measure of power of the Central Committee and the Council of Ministers. This initiative probably came from Beria, in any case, he later operated actively in this direction, striving to put the main, primary people into the posts of Chairman of the Council of Ministers in the republics and secondary people in the posts of Central Committee secretaries.

These are not my reflections at the time, naturally, but today.

April 7, 1979

After the conclusion, making an arrangement with Shepilov, editor of PRAVDA at the time, we writers—I firmly remember that this was Fadeyev, Korneychuk and I, I can't remember if we were with Surkov and Tvardovskiy as well—went to the editorial offices of PRAVDA. Aside from everything that, it would seem, completely filled our heads at the time—these events and changes—and aside from the fact that the very nature of the session and the appointments made at it testified to the fact that Stalin was about to die, I still had a feeling that I tried to get rid of and could not: I had the feeling

that the people who had appeared from the rear room, in the Presidium, the old members of the Politburo, had come out with some secret—not outwardly expressed but sensed in them—feeling of relief. This was somehow discernible in their faces—perhaps with the exception of the face of Molotov—immobile, like stone. As for Malenkov and Beria, who spoke from the rostrum, both of them had spoken animatedly, energetically, in businesslike fashion. Something in their voices and their behavior did not conform to the preambles that preceded the text of their speeches and the mournful endings of their speeches connected with Stalin's illness. There was a feeling that right there, in the Presidium, the people had been freed of something that was oppressing them and binding them. They were somehow unwaddled or something. Maybe I wasn't thinking about it in the words I am writing about it now, most probably not. I was thinking more cautiously and with less confidence. But there is no doubt that I was thinking of this. This I later remembered my whole life as the basis of my feelings then, not now.

We were at PRAVDA for about twenty minutes and sat in Shepilov's office. The conversation was somehow muffled, none of us particularly wanted to speak. We talked about what we should think about the fact that well-known writers should come out with a series of articles in PRAVDA on various topics, that this was essential, that a plan for such articles must be drawn up, and so on and so forth. But we talked about all of this like it was essential to talk about it but it was a little early to do so, because although the new composition of the Central Committee Presidium and the Secretariat had been determined, although the Council of Ministers had been formed with Malenkov at its head, although Voroshilov had become the Chairman of the Supreme Soviet—all of this was so, but in order to write, some certainty was needed about what the writers should write and what was wanted of them. There was no certainty, because Stalin was still alive or it was felt that he was still alive. About forty minutes were thus spent on this discussion, and I do not know how much longer it would have gone on—sluggish and uncertain—when there was a call from on high. Shepilov took the phone, said "Yes, yes," into it several times and, returning to the table where we were sitting, said, "They have called to say that Comrade Stalin has died."

And notwithstanding all that had happened before—at the session, after which we had come here, the decisions that had been made—all the same, something in us, in me at any rate, shuddered at that moment. Something in life ended. Something else, still unknown, had begun. It had not begun when it had been necessary, in connection with this and that and this and that, to designate Malenkov Chairman of the Council of Ministers while Stalin was still alive and he was so designated—not then, but right now, after this call.

I do not remember who took on what, who intended to do and write what—I said that I would write some verse.

I did not know if I would be able to write this verse, but I knew that I could not do anything else at that moment.

I went home, not tarrying at PRAVDA. LITERATURNAYA GAZETA came out only the day after tomorrow, the seventh, and I, returning home, called my deputy Boris Sergeyevich Ryurikov to say that I would be in in a couple of hours, I was shut up in my room and was writing verse. I wrote the first two stanzas and suddenly and unexpectedly, sitting at the table, burst into sobbing. I could have avoided acknowledging this today, because I don't like anyone's tears—not those of others, not my own—but probably, without it it would be difficult even to explain to myself the measure of my shock. I was not crying from grief, not from sympathy with the deceased, these were not sentimental tears, these were tears of shock. Something had turned around in life, and the shock of this turnaround was so enormous that it must have been manifested somehow physically as well, in this case a spasm of sobbing, which racked me for several minutes. Then I finished the verses, sent them to PRAVDA and went to LITERATURNAYA GAZETA in order to tell Ryurikov what had happened at the Kremlin. Tomorrow we would have to do the next issue of the paper, and he had to know this—the sooner the better.

I have before me now a file of materials and documents from those March days that I collected then, in 1953. All shoved into one file that has been lying around for years: the band of mourning with which I stood in the honor guard, the pass to Red Square with the imprint "passage everywhere"; the shorthand report of one of the two writers' meetings of mourning at which I spoke, along with many others, and a clipping of a newspaper report on another writers' meeting where I read my own verse, bad notwithstanding the sobbing; a bundle of newspapers from those days—PRAVDA, IZVESTIYA, LITERATURNAYA GAZETA and others.

Later, years afterward, various writers have written different things in different ways about Stalin. It was generally those close to each other speaking then—Tikhonov, Surkov, Erenburg. Everything said then was very similar. Maybe some distinctions in lexicon, but even those not very appreciable. The verses also had a strikingly similar note. The best of all—not surprising, taking into account the measure of talent—were written by Tvardovskiy: more restrained, more precise. Almost all surprisingly came together on one:

In this hour of greatest grief,  
I cannot find the words,  
To express completely  
Our nationwide sorrow...

That was Tvardovskiy.



There are not words to convey  
The whole unbearableness of pain and grief,  
There are not words to relate,  
How we lament for you, Comrade Stalin!

And that was Simonov.

The heart bleeds...  
Our dear, our beloved!  
Holding the head of your casket,  
The Motherland weeps for you.

This was Berggolts.

Let us not be consoled in our grief,  
But he, the Teacher, taught us always:  
Do not sag in spirit, do not hang your head,  
Whatever misfortune may descend.

And that was Isakovskiy.

The verse we wrote at the time about Stalin was similar, very similar. Olga Berggolts, who was in prison in 1937, Tvardovskiy, the son of a dispossessed kulak, Simonov, scion of the estate and Mikhail Isakovskiy, the old rural communist. Other lines by other people with the most diverse of biographies connected with the various twists of fortune of an individual in the Stalin period could probably also be added to this. The similarity of the verse nonetheless was engendered not by the compulsion to write it—it need not have been written—but rather by a deep internal feeling of the enormity of the loss, the enormity of what had happened. We still had long years ahead until to try to investigate what was behind this loss, and whether it would have been better or worse—I am not afraid to pose myself this quite harsh question—for all of us and the country if this loss had happened not then but somewhat later. All of this had to be investigated, especially after the 20th Congress, but before it as well.

The very enormity of what had happened, however, was not subject to doubt, and the power of Stalin's influence and the whole order of things connected with this personality was also not subject to doubt for the circle of people I belonged to. And the word "loss" went with the word "sorrow" without forcing it in the verse that we wrote at the time. "That is how it was on Earth," Tvardovskiy would say a little later, one of the first to start thinking about this and more profoundly than the others.

Now, flipping through the newspapers of the time once more, I want to return to my own reflections of when Stalin died all the same—they were preparing us for this, whether he died before the joint session making the new appointments or if he actually died when Shepilov got the call at PRAVDA, about ten o'clock in the evening of March 5. I don't want to build conjecture on material inaccessible to other people, but I am reading here the decree of the joint session of the Central Committee,

Council of Ministers and the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet that appeared the day after the report of Stalin's death, and I see that in the preamble on the death of Stalin they do not speak of his death, it was mentioned the night before in the appeal to all party members and all workers of the Soviet Union, while the preamble to the decree is composed in such a way that it is unknown on what day this joint session took place—whether it preceded the death of Stalin or was held after his death. I will quote this preamble, it is very interesting from this point of view:

"The Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, the USSR Council of Ministers and the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet, in this difficult time for our party and our country, feel that the most important task of the party and the government is to ensure the uninterrupted and correct leadership of the entire life of the country, which in turn requires the greatest possible cohesion of the leadership, the intolerance of any sort of disorders or panic, so as thereby to unconditionally ensure the successful pursuit in life of the policies devised by our party and government—both in the domestic affairs of our country and in international affairs. Proceeding from this and for the purpose of not permitting any interruptions in the leadership of the activity of state and party organs, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, the USSR Council of Ministers and the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet deem it essential to implement a series of measures to organize party and state leadership."

On the other side of the PRAVDA page where this was printed was published the decree to place Stalin's sarcophagus alongside that of Lenin, the decree to set up a pantheon, the decree of mourning—March 6, 7, 8 and 9. Also there was the notification of the commission to organize the funeral on access to the Hall of Columns and the time of the funeral along with the first report from the Hall of Columns titled "At the Casket of I.V. Stalin." But the preamble of the decree on measures "to organize party and state leadership" had no mention of the name of Stalin and no mention of whether he was still alive or dead.

Logic forces one to assume that all of this was as it was reported to us, that is the joint session was assembled while Stalin was in an absolutely hopeless condition, his death was anticipated from minute to minute. The decree was devised and ready to the last comma and period, its publication was evidently not intended to be postponed in the event that Stalin had been at death's door for another day or two, or even several days. And perhaps it would have been published on the sixth rather than the seventh, right after the plenum, along with the hopeless bulletin. But Stalin died almost immediately after the end of the session, and it was therefore decided to publish the appeal to the party and the people on the death of Stalin and then, on the next day, the decree on

the personnel makeup of the organs of power and their partial re-organization. Logic allows such a possibility, although it does not completely rule out various other assumptions as well.

Now I return to my entries for 1953, or rather, the last entry that discusses the Hall of Columns and the funeral of Stalin:

Although they reported to me by phone that I should come to the Hall of Columns at about three o'clock in the afternoon, I got there with great difficulty only around five. It was almost impossible to get to the Hall of Columns on foot...

I would add to my entry of the time that I lived then at the corner of Pushkin Square, but I was unable to walk down Gorky Street, the Dmitrovka or the Petrovka. On Trubnaya Square I encountered a throng with the then minister of the timber industry, Georgiy Mikhaylovich Orlov, whom I knew, because we had fought over paper problems on the pages of LITERATURNAYA GAZETA. We went on together down along the Neglinnaya and, notwithstanding our Central Committee credentials, we could barely fight through the unspoken confusion that reigned on the streets of Moscow: they were crawling under trucks partitioning off the Neglinnaya, then crawling through the trucks that partitioned it off again, so squeezed on all sides that we could not get papers out of our hands, pushed forward with the throng of people first forward and then back, finally escaping from the crush somewhere behind the Malyy Theater. I don't know how it was at other times, but in those two hours that we were getting through, the throng was not an embittered crush, not nasty, but bitterly sullen, although so powerful in its united persistence in getting closer to the Hall of Columns that the police were dismayed in the face of this sullen and unified doggedness of the movement.

I return to the entry:

They were pinning bands of mourning on the sleeves of people behind the Presidium. Some went out into the honor guard of mourning, others came back from it. That probably went on for about an hour. Finally, our turn came as well. I stood next to people I did not know, with some two women. We went out and stood to the right of the head. I turned my head and only then, standing there, I saw the face of Stalin lying in the casket. His face was very peaceful, no thinner at all and not changed. His hair had begun thinning out recently (this was evident when he walked about during the sessions and, passing near us, turned to the side). But now this was not noticeable, his hair was lying peacefully, brushed back and into the pillow. Then, when we began walking around the casket in a circle, I saw Stalin's face from the right, from the other side, and I thought once again that his face had not changed at all, it was not thinner and it was very peaceful, not an old man's at all, still young. Later, returning from the Hall of Columns, I thought that

it could seem to people who had not seen Stalin in recent years or saw him only from afar and knew him chiefly from portraits of the war and pre-war years, now suddenly seeing him up close in the Hall of Columns, that he had aged, that illness had changed his face. But in fact that was not so, the illness had not changed his face at all. His hands were lying peacefully on top of a gray service jacket.

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I stood in the honor guard of mourning several times that day and spent probably two hours at the door where people were coming in. The line of people coming to pay their respects to Stalin. I stood to the right of the doors themselves, pressed up against the lintel, and I saw the face of Stalin the whole time. The people came in and stood shoulder to shoulder with me at the very moment they saw at once the hall, the casket and Stalin lying in it all at once. I do not know how to record this so that it is completely precise—they did not cry, they did not jump, but they all expressed their feelings at that moment in some palpable, evident way. And at the same time I experienced some inner tone of the spiritual upheaval of each pair of people who walked by me at the second when they saw Stalin in the casket. I do not know, maybe I simply cannot express what I felt there, but it was something like the feeling that I was talking about and repeated many times about myself.

March 9, the day of the funeral, we came into the Hall of Columns at nine o'clock. At first we stood in the honor guard of mourning, then entered the hall. (I will say in parentheses—this is not in the entry—that the "we" evidently signifies writers; it seems that on that final day I came to the Hall of Columns together with Surkov and Fadeyev, who lived near me.—K.S.) The last honor guard was changing—music was playing and a women's chorus was singing. When I stood alone among the last of the honor guard, suddenly on the dais, where the casket stood, two or three steps above, the daughter of Stalin, Svetlana, rose and looked for a long time at her father, at his face. She turned, left and once again sat in the chair to the right of Stalin's head. The last honor guard continued to change. From the rear door came the leaders of the party and the government, approaching the casket. At that moment the marshals began taking pillows with the orders and medals of Stalin. And only then did I notice, although I had stood in the honor guard several times over these days, these pillows lying in front of the casket at its feet. Budenny took the first one, and the others came behind. The casket was closed with a semicircular glass or plexiglass canopy over Stalin's face, and they lifted it up and carried it out. The procession moved slowly, we went in the last rows of it, and behind us, one or two rows back, came the diplomats. Looking around, I saw that some of them were walking in strange and even ridiculous looking top hats in this procession.

Ahead at the caisson were visible the plumes bobbing on the heads of the horses and the four thin soldiers' bayonets on the four sides of the casket. Opposite the

Moskva Hotel, when we went by it, it became visible as the procession with the garlands was already moving forward up the hill of Red Square.

The mourning service began when the casket was placed near the mausoleum. When the service ended and the casket was placed in the mausoleum, all began filing down to it.

While still standing in the Hall of Columns, I had thought several times about why they had placed Stalin's hands as they did, and suddenly, upon entering the mausoleum, I understood that his hands had been placed in exactly the same manner as Lenin's.

At first, inside the mausoleum, going up its steps, we passed alongside the sarcophagus in which Lenin was lying, and then, turning, passed alongside Stalin's casket, placed on a dark and narrow marble stone alongside Lenin's sarcophagus, and passing by there, for the first time quite close, less than an outstretched hand away, I saw the face of Stalin once more. It was so animate, if such a thing can be said about a dead face, that with a particular and terrible force of shock at exactly that second I thought that he was dead. And then up the stairs, all of this left behind, and we left the mausoleum.

That concludes my entry about Stalin and his death and funeral made on March 16, 1953. After this I recorded nothing more, all the rest that I remember from those days is just in my memory. At first much probably remained, and then less and less. The rest has blown away. Out of what has not blown away and remains, two impressions have been engraved most powerfully in my memory.

One was connected with what I saw in the mausoleum. Maybe I did not record this then out of a feeling of some spiritual awkwardness, a feeling I do not have today. Arising there in seeing so close to you, literally half a meter from your eyes, such an animate face of Stalin, it was connected with the contrast between his face and that of Lenin in his sarcophagus. I had been in the mausoleum many times before that and had become accustomed to that ancient waxen face of Lenin, removed from us for many decades. But the face of Stalin here, alongside, was not only unaccustomed, but even almost alive, namely from the contrast with the face of Lenin, long since off into the ages. It was as if it were an image of Lenin lying in the sarcophagus, while here—a closed glass cover over a living person, living and terrible, because the last impression that I had at the time, at the plenum when he spoke, was namely a feeling of terribleness, a danger taking place.

And the second impression, which I quite consciously did not record at the time, in 1953, but I have always remembered as seeming to my eyes an undoubtedly obvious one. Three different people spoke at the mourning service. I listened to all three with the same attention. The first was Malenkov, the second Beria and the third,

Molotov. Differences in the text of their speeches were not evident to me then, or now either, when I re-read them in an old newspaper, they did not differ much from each other, really only in the fact that in the speech of Molotov, in the first paragraph of it, he spoke of Stalin in more human terms, a little bit less formally, than in the other speeches. The difference that you do not catch now from the text of the speeches, but that was quite obvious to me then, consisted of the fact that Malenkov, and after him Beria, made purely the political speeches that were essential on this score over Stalin's casket. But the way that they gave these speeches, the way they spoke, was lacking in even a hint of their own attitude toward the dead man, there was not even a shadow of personal sorrow, commiseration or agitation, or any feelings of loss—in this sense both speeches were absolutely identically cold. The speech of Malenkov, given in his quite rounded voice, revealed the absence of any feeling of sorrow a little less. The speech of Beria, with his accent, with his sharp and sometimes croaking intonations in his voice, revealed the lack of this sorrow more clearly. And in general, the spiritual state of both orators was the state of people who had come to power and were quite satisfied with that fact.

The speech of Molotov, as I have already said, differed little in text from the others, but he spoke as a person who had parted with another person, whom he, despite everything, had loved, and this love together with the bitterness of the loss came through with a certain wavering in the voice of this rock-hard man. I recalled, could not help but recall, the plenum at which Stalin had spoken with such cruelty about Molotov, even with this contrast I could not help but regard the depth of something that continued to exist for Molotov, not completely snapped with the death of Stalin, that bound these two people—the living and the dead. I say this in the words of today, because I did not record it. Whatever words I thought of at the time—and after all, we think namely in words—I cannot resurrect, but I thought this and then recalled it more than once in my life, most often in connection with the later fate and later behavior of Molotov.

Obviously—I think this now—there is a very great difference between words pupil, closest pupil, even best pupil, comrade-in-arms, true comrade-in-arms, closest comrade-in-arms and the words like-minded person. It seems to me that among people who worked for many long years with Stalin, under his leadership, at various times awarded the epithets "best pupil" or "closest comrade-in-arms"—the concept of "like-minded person" can be relegated most of all namely to Molotov.

Leafing today through the March and April issues of the newspapers from 1953, checking them against my own personal recollections, I cannot help but direct attention toward the chronological sequence of some newspaper reports of the time and some photos that did not call attention to themselves at the time but strike you today. PRAVDA for March 10, 1953. Page one. The rostrum of



the mausoleum, under the edge of which there was at first not one but two words: "Lenin," "Stalin." In the marble, one under the other. Malenkov at the microphone in a hat with earflaps, and to his right between Khrushchev in a Caucasian fur cap and Chou En-Lai in a Chinese fur hat was Beria, his broad shoulders corpulently bursting his overcoat standing next to them, wrapped in some scarf covering his chin, in a hat pulled right down to his pince-nez, a wide-brimmed hat, a gloomy and purposeful look, not looking like anyone else standing on the mausoleum. Looking most of all like a capo of some secret Mafia from some film that came out later and did not exist yet. And he was on the second page again with Chou En-Lai and Khrushchev, in the same overcoat with a scarf, in the same wide-brimmed hat pulled down to his pince-nez, walking behind the casket of Stalin. As later events showed, he had hoped to come to power by the shortest path. These hopes were connected both with his long years of special position during Stalin's life and with what he had prepared earlier for it, personnel personally devoted to him, that depended on him, that were entirely in his hands one way or another, along with his nature as a determined and bold adventurer able at any time to turn the collective-leadership situation that had arisen to his advantage. In the face of the general determination to replace Stalin collectively and devise compromise solutions acceptable to all, as far as possible avoiding any internal clashes—such a person as Beria could probably seize any kernel advantageous to him in that situation. The more initiative he conducted himself with, the more he advanced proposals, the more he speculated on the general reluctance for internal conflicts to arise, the more successfully he would be achieving that which would reinforce his position and expand his opportunities to seize power, for which he was prepared. With the exception of a single instance, I will try to track all the rest from the newspapers of the times, accessible to all.

Making use of the fact that Malenkov, having made the reporting speech several months earlier at the 19th Party Congress in the name of the Central Committee, could now, when Stalin was dying or had already died, be considered Stalin's heir to the top post in the country, Beria seized upon Malenkov, evidently together with him sketching out the initial draft of the future changes and at the plenum publicly advancing him for the post of chairman of the Council of Ministers.

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At the time this could have seemed to stand to reason, although it did not stand to reason. There was another alternative: among the old members of the Politburo was Molotov, behind whom stood ten years of work as chairman of the Council of Ministers and who in the event of the division of posts, were Malenkov to join the Central Committee as—called such or something else—the general secretary, replacing Stalin in that post, Molotov could have replaced Stalin as chairman of the Council of Ministers. Molotov was popular, and such an

appointment would obviously have been met with a positive attitude by the broad masses. But Beria was helped by Stalin himself, in his last speech for some reasons of his own—maybe not quite his own, but some made for him by other levels of authority—he had ripped Molotov with such force that the appointment of Molotov to one of the two posts occupied by Stalin would have been perceived by the people who heard Stalin's speech as something completely counter to his wishes. Why would Beria have a vested interest that Malenkov become the heir to Stalin in namely the post of chairman of the Council of Ministers, while the post of Stalin in the Central Committee Secretariat would be occupied by a person, from Beria's point of view, on a secondary scale—Khrushchev—whose personality and character Beria did not investigate right up to the day of his fall? It is very simple. Beria's idea was reduced to the fact that the chief role in leading the country would be played by the chairman of the Council of Ministers and his deputies, they would almost entirely comprise the makeup of the Presidium proposed by him and Malenkov in the same draft. All power in the country would thus be concentrated in the hands of the members of the Presidium, simultaneously making up the leadership of the Council of Ministers. Beria, the first to name Malenkov the future chairman of the Council of Ministers, was now next named by Malenkov as the first of his four deputies. The order in which people are named in such cases traditionally had significance as the order of succession; that is, in the event of the absence or illness of Malenkov, this order would assume that the acting chairman of the Council of Ministers would be the first of the deputies named—Beria.

Having begun with this, let's go further. Some time before the death of Stalin, Beria was not in the post of minister of state security, although he continued in practice to run the ministries of state security and internal affairs to this or that extent. In the last months Stalin named the old party worker Ignatyev to the post of minister of state security.

In the resolution adopted at the joint session, a whole series of ministries were enlarged, merged with each other, and the Ministry of State Security was liquidated and merged with the Ministry of Internal Affairs, and Beria as the first of the first deputies of Malenkov simultaneously became the head of the new Ministry of Internal Affairs, which had absorbed the Ministry of State Security. And the recent minister of state security, Ignatyev, became the Central Committee secretary, but as we shall see later, not for long.

And so, Beria had created in advance a position most suitable for seizing power and for subsequent events, the scope and nature of which, taking into account the personality of Beria, obviously would have had quite a gloomy and global nature.

After power was concentrated in the leadership of the Council of Ministers, while the Central Committee Secretariat was relegated to secondary functions, Beria tried

to achieve a shift in the center of gravity of power in the localities, in the republics, from the Central Committees to the Councils of Ministers, and in several instances, especially in Baku, he was achieving this. Thereafter, as minister of internal affairs, he advanced the idea of amnesty. At one time, at the end of 1938, Stalin had appointed him in place of Yezhov, and the beginning of Beria's activity in Moscow was connected with a multitude of rehabilitations, dropping of cases and the return from the camps and prisons of tens, if not hundreds, of thousands of people—that is the role that had been defined for him at the time by Stalin, and he played according to all the rules of the game in the pre-war years. Beria understood this and was counting on the fact that others would remember it—in any case, he intended to revive it in peoples' memory. He was hoping that the ukase of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet on amnesty would be ascribed to him, the minister of internal affairs, and his efforts, according to which amnesty not only would those sentenced to terms of up to five years inclusive be released, but those cases being considered would be dropped for which the punishment was no more than five years; thus those condemned of economic, official and a whole series of military crimes were released. This measure, humanitarian in and of itself, was being pursued unusually hastily—the impression arose that later, under certain circumstances and with certain propaganda work in this direction, some of those released or unpunished would form a breeding ground for support for him, Beria.

Six days after this ukase, April 4, a report of the USSR Ministry of Internal Affairs, headed by Beria, appeared in the newspapers that the USSR Ministry of Internal Affairs had carried out a careful review of the case of the so-called "doctors' plot": "It has been established as a result of the review that the doctors subjected to trial..."—here there was a long list—"were arrested by the former USSR Ministry of State Security incorrectly, without any legal grounds. It has been established that the depositions of those arrested, supposedly confirming the accusations advanced against them, had been obtained by the workers of the investigative section of the former Ministry of State Security via the application of methods of investigation that are impermissible and most strictly forbidden by Soviet law." The former Ministry of State Security thus proved to be guilty of all of these sins, while the current Ministry of Internal Affairs had unmasked the shady methods of the former ministry. It was elaborated two days later in a lead article in PRAVDA that this had occurred first and foremost because the former minister of state security, S.D. Ignatyev, had displayed political blindness and scatter-brainedness and had proven to be under the thumb of criminal adventurers. Beria, as the head of the new Ministry of Internal Affairs, had unmasked all of this illegality. A report was published the same day that Ignatyev had been released from his duties as Central Committee secretary.

Thus this whole series of measures took place through the press, and only later revealing their inner sense as

preparatory moves on the road to seizing power that were being quickly taken, one after the other, by Beria.

One of these steps did not end up in the papers, but I am among the people who know about it. I cannot recall precisely when it was, but probably, the dates could be resurrected by trying, because at the time Fadeyev and Korneychuk, former members of the Central Committee, both went on foreign trips on business for Soviet Peace. Soon after the report on the falsification of the doctors' affair, the members and candidate members of the Central Committee, in two or three rooms earmarked for the purpose, were acquainted with the documents testifying to the immediate participation of Stalin in the whole story of the "doctors' plot," with the depositions of the arrested chief of the investigative section of the former Ministry of State Security, Ryumin, and his conversations with Stalin, about the demands of Stalin to make the interrogations more harsh—and so on and so forth. There were also depositions by other people immediately connected in all sorts of ways with the role of Stalin in this affair. There were records of conversations with Stalin on this topic. I am not certain, but it seems that they were initially recorded on a machine and then transferred to paper.

I read these papers in three or four visits over the course of roughly a week. Then this reading was halted, cut off all at once. The idea of presenting these documents to the members and candidate members of the Central Committee to read undoubtedly belonged to Beria, it was namely he who had these documents at his disposal, and it later became clear that that is how it was. He wanted to acquire additional popularity, showing himself to be an impartial person, not accidentally pushed somewhat to the side during the last months of Stalin's life, a person whom Stalin did not trust or had ceased to trust, a person who was in no way inclined to continue the cruelty and the disgraceful lawlessness that, judging from the documents presented to us for reading, were connected directly with Stalin, with his initiative, with his demands. Exhibiting the documents for survey, Beria seemingly was asserting that he was far away from and categorically opposed to all of this, that he did not intend to cover up the sins of Stalin, on the contrary, he wanted to depict him in true form.

The reading was hard, the entries were similar to the truth and testified to the painful psychological state of Stalin, his suspicion and cruelty bordering on psychosis. The documents were grouped in such a way as to present Stalin namely from that angle.

Here's your Stalin, it was as if Beria were saying. I don't know how you feel, but I disavow myself of him. I don't know about you, but I intend to tell the whole truth about him. Naturally, in the documents he presented only that truth that was necessary and advantageous to him, leaving all the rest to be incidental.

These documents were in circulation for about a week. After this no one was acquainted with them. When Korneychuk and Fadeyev returned and I told them about these documents, they're eyes almost jumped out of their heads, but they were not able to read them over themselves.

It must be said that although Beria's goal was quite underhanded, it soon became quite clear to me that these documents, even if specifically selected, were not falsified. I was therefore probably more prepared for the moral blow that I suffered during Khrushchev's speech at the 20th Congress than many other people.

Four months after the death of Stalin, on July 3, 1953, I was sitting in the editorial offices of LITERATURNAYA GAZETA and working on the next issue when I was called by the former executive secretary and later editor of KRASNAYA ZVEZDA, Vasilii Petrovich Moskovskiy, who in 1953 was working as deputy chief of the agitprop administration of the Central Committee, and asked how things were going with the newspaper. This call was quite late at night, about eleven o'clock. I said that one page had gone to the typesetters, and I and other "fresh heads" were still reading the others.

"Stop," Vasilii Petrovich told me. "Don't print a single page yet."

"And in the meantime?" I asked.

"I must speak with you."

"Fine, I'll stop," I said. "I'll be over right away."

"No need to come here, I'll come over myself. And stop the printing."

I stopped the printing of the pages, saying that official material was possibly coming in that was usually not compulsory but in this case might be compulsory, that we would have to investigate further whether we would print it or not. Thus let the "fresh heads" finish reading the rest of the pages, and then we would print them all in succession. I did not go into any more detailed explanations.

After about fifteen minutes, Moskovskiy arrived in my office and asked that no one come in while he was there. I warned my surprised secretary, Tatyana Aleksandrovna, that no one was to be let in without exception.

"No one?" she repeated, because that was not done at our paper.

"No one."

I went into the office, closed the door, sat in the chair opposite Moskovskiy and began waiting for what was so extraordinary that he had to report. No doubt it was something extraordinary. The simplest explanation that

had entered my head, even before Moskovskiy arrived, was the idea that suddenly, as had already happened once before this, they had decided to remove me from the paper and my signature should not appear on the next issue. But why hold back all the pages? They could have held back just the last. No, evidently it was something really very important, way more important than my release from the editorship, over which I would not have shed tears.

"Listen to me carefully," said Moskovskiy and switched to an official tone. "The Central Committee has charged me with reporting to you as editor of LITERATURNAYA GAZETA for your personal, only your own personal, information, that Comrade Beria has today been removed from the Central Committee Presidium and the Central Committee, expelled from the party, released from the duties of deputy chairman of the Council of Ministers and minister of internal affairs and has been arrested for his criminal activity." Moskovskiy spilled out all of this in an official tone but all in one breath, without even noticing that by accustomed habit, at the beginning of this report he had forgotten to remove the mechanically spoken word "Comrade" in front of Beria's name.

"I understand," I said. "But just what happened? What's going on?"

"You will find out everything that has happened at nine o'clock tomorrow at the Central Committee Plenum, and until then, with a regard for what I have reported to you, personally re-read all of the pages so that there is no mention of Beria in them."

"There's nothing about Beria in them, why should there be?" I said, recalling all four type pages of today's paper. "We're not getting any special materials, why should he be?"

"I don't know why," said Moskovskiy. "I have officially warned you, I have no more time, I must go on, and you must re-read all of the pages personally. And don't tell anyone anything. Clear?"

"Clear."

Thus, without telling anyone anything, I stood at my desk like a fool for another two hours, re-reading all four pages on which the name of Beria could actually appear in some report on agriculture, where his name might figure in a kolkhoz or sovkhoz. But not finding anything of the sort, I had signed all of the pages by the middle of the night.

I will try now to recall what impression this event, the complete reversal in the fortunes of Beria, made on me then, that evening and that night. The main thing was a feeling of relief that things that could have happened would not happen, everything would be left as before. The fact that Beria was close to Stalin, the fact that one



way or another, all the times he was in Moscow, engaged not only with the Ministry of Internal Affairs or the Ministry of State Security, industry or the construction ministries, part of the State Defense Committee during the war, he always had some additional power therein either as a leading person or an observer of the organs of intelligence and counter-intelligence—all of this was well known. And obviously, some of the reputation he created for himself in the timely and urgent fulfillment of these or those state assignments in the realm of industry was mixed up with the fear and trepidation that people were seized with from his combination of jobs—this was among the circumstances that could easily be divined, and we did divine them.

With the position that Beria occupied with Stalin, the fact that he was among the leading individuals after the death of Stalin seemed natural. But the fact that he was immediately made the number-two man and was very active, the fact that it was he and no one else who proposed the candidacy of Malenkov—a certain feeling of danger arose from this. Many people felt it. The times, especially in the first months after the death of Stalin, continued to be harsh, and the first tangible change in them was manifested only with the unmasking of the falsified affair of the "doctors' plot" and the release of those people. The times were not predisposed to a too-candid discussion of these topics, but I remember that alarm was still manifested among various people with reservation and reticence associated with the position occupied by Beria after the death of Stalin. There were also such nuances among the diversely expressed alarms as: wouldn't Beria try to take Stalin's place as successor in the fullest sense of the word?

As for me, having spent all of my so-called two- or three-month creative sabbaticals from work between 1948 and 1953 first in Sukhumi and then around Sukhumi, in the village of Gulripshi, where I got acquainted with many Abkhazians and many Georgians, I knew about Beria's activity when he was in the Caucasus, about the influence he had had there, in the Caucasus, first and foremost in Georgia and, afterward, how he came to Moscow—I knew all of this much more than others who had not lived there. I encountered here and there recollections of families that had disappeared, people who had perished or were driven from life in Georgia, among party workers and among the intelligentsia—this was before Beria came to Moscow in the role of the person who was correcting the mistakes of Yezhov.

My interlocutors were in no way chatty, and the times were not disposed to such chattiness, but nonetheless first one thing and then another came through from them. And I gradually compiled for myself quite a complete depiction of how, before doing the great favor for those that were still alive and letting them out of the camps and prisons after Yezhov, Beria mowed Georgia cleaner than Yezhov had Russia, and moreover there was something terrible that could be glimpsed associated with vengeance and his settling of personal accounts in

some of the details of stories of events from 1936, 1937 and earlier years. Two or three of my Abkhazian friends, evidently trusting me completely, related to me the terrible things connected with the arbitrary rule of Beria in Abkhazia and the demise of many people there. Some of this I could believe, some of it I could not, so wild did it seem to me at the time, in the years long before the investigation of Beria's affairs at the Central Committee Plenum, at his trial and before the 20th Congress. Sometimes I could not believe or completely believe what later, several years afterward, it would have been strange not to believe from the first. There were such rumors connected with this native son of the Mingrel village of Merkheuli, just ten kilometers or so from Gulripshi where I was living, such hints in conversation, details that came out suddenly about ancient and not so ancient times, that the feeling that he was a person not only terrible in the past, but dangerous in the future as well, was formed in me quite staunchly. And I immediately perceived the news brought to me by Vasily Petrovich Moskovskiy as something, not completely thought through, of an instinctive relief, as something ridding us of a danger hanging in the air... Recollections of direct conversations, of hints and half-hints—all of this was spinning around in my memory when I read over the pages of the newspaper again. But all of this was in addition to the first feeling, as soon as it was revealed, quite widespread among an extensive mass of people.

In the morning I went to the Central Committee Plenum, which lasted, I think, five or six days and at which everything was said about Beria that could be said while shielding Stalin as much as possible therein, far from always convincingly and far from always successfully.

Khrushchev related how at the plenum they caught Beria literally on the eve of his planned seizure of power. The phrase "caught" most closely conforms to the nature of Khrushchev's story, his temperament and the impassioned satisfaction with which he related all of this.

It followed quite naturally from his story—which no one at the plenum repudiated and no one argued with, it simply didn't occur to anyone to do so—that namely he, Khrushchev, had played the chief role in capturing and disarming this great beast. This was completely obvious to me when I heard that Khrushchev was the initiator of this red-handed capture, because he had proved to be more penetrating, talented, energetic and decisive than all the rest. And on the other hand, this had been facilitated by the fact that Beria had underestimated Khrushchev, his qualities, his profound natural and purely peasant's tenacious cunning, his common sense, as well as the force of his character and, on the contrary, had considered him to be such an all-round and clumsy fool that he, Beria, the master of intrigue, could wrap him around his little finger very easily. Khrushchev spoke gloatingly in his speech about what a fool Beria considered him to be.

I won't write any more about this plenum, at which, aside from Khrushchev's speech, the most powerful impression was made on me by the especially intelligent, tough, consistent and reasoned speeches of Zavenyagin and Kosygin. It would divert me from the main topic of my records.

The fall of Beria, if you will, was similar to the last, very last, exploding shell after a long pause. And without speaking figuratively, everything that happened, everything that Beria was trying to do, and everything they caught him red-handed with, everything they brought against him all at once over many years—all of this was not the last, but the clearest, the most ugly, the most foul-smelling regurgitation of that whole era that was associated in our minds with the name of Stalin.

If you try and assemble and press together into something unified all the most repulsive to human consciousness, the cruelest, most tragic, savage and dirty that there was in that era, singling it out and separating it from all the rest, from everything else that there also was, then it was namely Beria, his affair, the very possibility of his long years of existence under Stalin that was that bundle of filth, political and moral, that had been thrown out and, it is completely obvious afterward, that was cut short by the death of Stalin.

Having written all of this, I would like to try and investigate my own attitude toward Stalin during the period between his death and the 20th Congress, in those three years.

The complexity of my spiritual state in those years consisted of the fact that in general I had grown up and been educated under Stalin. Under him I finished school, under him I entered FZU [factory training], under him I was a worker, under him I became a student at the Literary Institute, under him I began to write, under him I became a professional writer, under him, before the war, I entered the party as a candidate member, and then a full member, under him I was a war correspondent, under him I received six Stalin prizes, one of which I felt was undeserved, but the rest deserved, under him I became the editor of NOVYY MIR and LITERATURNAYA GAZETA, deputy general secretary of the Writers' Union, a candidate member of the Central Committee, and several times I was convinced that I enjoyed his trust. Under him my stepfather was imprisoned and then released, under him my aunt and my first cousins were exiled, under him two other aunts of mine perished somewhere in exile, one beloved and one not so beloved, under him my first leader of a creative seminar was imprisoned and, notwithstanding my letter, was not released or sent to the front, a man whom I liked very much, under him, at my intercession, they returned my one remaining living aunt to Moscow. Under him there were trials in which I understood far from everything. Under him there was Spain, where I was ready to go, there was Khalkhin-Gol, where I did go, under him there was the Great Patriotic War, in which I

saw much that was terrible, much that was wrong, much that made me indignant, but which we won nonetheless. Under him I listened to discussions about literature that seemed to me intelligent and correct, under him occurred the campaign to eradicate the cosmopolitans that diverged from these correct discussions. Under him we did not bow our heads toward an America that stuffed itself during the war, when the threat of the atomic bomb hung over us and we still did not have our own. Under him there were new arrests in the postwar years reminiscent of those in 1937 and 1938, under him there was the movement to fight for peace in which I took part in these same postwar years. All of this was under him, I am enumerating them in the disorder in which I recollect them. It was all under him.

It was terrible to read those documents testifying to the beginning disintegration of the personality, the cruelty, the half-senseless suspicion, those documents that for a week were shoved under our noses and were then cut off by Beria. That which was connected with the unmasking of Beria, with the political and moral filth that was discovered around all of this, despite the attempts of various people to spare Stalin the blow, nonetheless lay on him as well. But what was found out after the death of Stalin and the bewilderments that had accumulated over the years of his life, the not completely substantiated lack of agreement, doubts in the justice of this or that that he did—all of this proved to be insufficient to see him in a new light in the three years following his death. My attitude toward Stalin today has taken shape gradually, over the span of a quarter century. It has formed almost completely—almost, because it will take shape conclusively, probably, only as a result of this work, the first part of which I am finishing up. I cannot precisely formulate my attitude toward Stalin in those three years: it was very unstable. I tacked between various feelings and various points of view for various reasons.

The first and chief feeling was that we had been deprived of a great person. Only later did the feeling arise that it would have been better to be deprived of him a little sooner, then, maybe, there wouldn't have been many of the terrible things associated with the last years of his life. But there was what was, there are no variations in history. Variations are possible only in the future, they do not exist in the past. The first feeling of the enormity of the loss did not leave me for a long time, and in the first months it was especially strong. Obviously, under the influence of this feeling I, along with other men and women of letters, loved to demonstrate our whole lives the determination of his character, but in this instance, with the appearance of danger hiding in the bushes, I wrote the lead article published in LITERATURNAYA GAZETA on March 19, 1953, in which the following was said amongst everything else: "The most important, the highest mission that has been placed with all persistence before Soviet literature, consists of engraving in all its magnitude and all its fullness the image of the greatest genius of all times and peoples—the immortal Stalin." Later, it is true, in the lead article it was elucidated that

in depicting the image of Stalin, writers would create an image connected with his activity of the era, the achievements of this era and so forth and so on, but the basic formulation was namely that. The lead was called "The Sacred Duty of the Writer," and in the first paragraph I have cited, the first thing was to impose on writers as their sacred duty the creation of the image of Stalin in literature. No one exactly forced me to write that. I could have written something else, but that is what I wrote, and this passage belongs to my pen and no other. I also set the overall tone of this lead, in which I considered the sacred duty of writers to be first and foremost memorial tasks, and not addressing the past or the future.

In my view at the time, the lead was just a lead, and I did not expect anything good or bad, at the basis of it was the speech I had made at the meeting of writers that had been held beforehand, the sense of which basically coincided with the sense of the lead. The reaction to this lead, however, proved to be unexpectedly tempestuous. I by that time, after a long struggle with various people who did not wish to understand that I wanted to continue to write something, had reserved for myself the right to put out two of the three issues of the newspaper a week, while the third was prepared in rough form along with my deputy, and this third, Saturday, issue was signed by the deputy. The issue with the lead "The Sacred Duty of the Writer" came out on Thursday. The Thursday after it came out I spent in the editorial offices, preparing the next issue and, around evening on Friday I left the city, for the dacha, so as to write there on Friday, Saturday and Sunday and come back to the offices on Monday morning and make up the second issue from early morning. There was no telephone at the dacha, and I returned to Moscow on Monday morning, not knowing anything in particular.

"Something happened," my deputy, Kosolapov, greeted me when I had barely picked up the Saturday issue and hadn't read it yet. "Better that Surkov tell you about it, call him up, he asked that you call as soon as you turned up."

I called Surkov, we met and the following came to light: Nikita Sergeyevich Khrushchev, at the time heading up the Central Committee Secretariat, having read the issue with my lead article "The Sacred Duty of the Writer" either on Thursday evening or Friday morning, had called the editorial offices—I was not there—and then the Writers' Union and declared that he had felt it necessary to get me out of the leadership of the LITERATURNAYA GAZETA, and he did not feel it possible for me to put out the next issue. Beforehand, before the ultimate resolution of the issue—it must be assumed, at the Politburo, that is what I thought myself—let Surkov read over and sign the next issue and, perhaps, subsequent issues as the acting general secretary of the Writers' Union.

From our later conversation, Surkov elucidated that the whole matter of the lead article "The Sacred Duty of the Writer," in which I called upon writers not to move

forward, not to engage in business and think about the future, but rather to look only back, to do only that which sung the praises of Stalin—with such a position there could be no question of me editing the newspaper.

In the words of Surkov—I don't remember if he spoke directly with Khrushchev or through intermediaries—Khrushchev was extremely heated and nasty.

"I personally," said Surkov, "saw and see nothing of the sort in that lead. Well, it is unfortunate, too much of a place really is allotted there to creating works on Stalin, that is the most important thing. Ultimately, so what? This unnecessary accent on the past can also be picked up from other lead articles. At first I wanted to send a courier to you, summon you, then I decided not to disturb you, maybe everything would work out over that time. The issue, Kosolapov told me, was ready. I went, over, looked it over and signed it. They didn't demand that I remove your name, just that I look it over and sign it. So I got to thinking, was it worth bowling you over while you were sitting out there writing? You'd be coming back on Monday, maybe everything would have settled down by then."

That is how it actually did turn out. At some stage, I don't know when. When Surkov called me at the agit-prop, they told him that I had gone to my editorial offices and was putting out the next issue. The matter ended there this time. This was evidently a personal outburst of the feelings of Khrushchev, to whom the idea of trying to dot the i's and relate about Stalin what he felt it necessary to relate at the 20th Congress was probably already not an alien one at that time, in 1953. Naturally, with such a sentiment a lead article with the title "The Sacred Duty of the Writer" with the call to create the epoch-making image of Stalin as the chief task of literature, as they say, gave him heartburn. And he was evidently at least inclined toward those steps he proposed in the heat of the moment that were not taken by the fact that he had disliked me for a long time, even before the appearance in the press of "The Living and the Dead," feeling me to be one of the most inveterate Stalinists in literature. Evidently so. By the way, in rereading the newspapers of the time now, I saw something I had long forgotten: it was namely Nikita Sergeyevich Khrushchev, by irony of fate, who was the chairman of the funeral commission for Iosif Vissarionovich Stalin, opening and closing the mourning service in Red Square. This had no relation whatsoever to the matter, but having noticed it, I did not want to let it pass.

I was not an inveterate Stalinist either in 1953, 1954 or during the life of Stalin. But in 1954, after the death of Stalin, a favorite photograph of mine of Stalin appeared in my office at home, taken from the sculpture of Vuchetich on the Volga-Don Canal—the powerful and intelligent face of an old tiger. I had no portraits of Stalin hanging during his lifetime, but now I went and hung this one. This was not Stalinism, but sooner something along the lines of a conceit of the gentry or intelligentsia: they



were hanging in your office, but not in mine, and now, when they're not hanging in your's, they are in mine. Aside from that, I liked that photograph.

In 1955, publishing a book of verse and poetry, I included in it some very bad verse written in 1943, soon after Stalingrad. Verses about how Stalin calls Lenin from Tsaritsyn, as is repeated during the Great Patriotic War, when an unnamed general or commander calls Stalin from Stalingrad, as he had at one time called Lenin. A verse that was not rich either in thought or in execution, not printed in its time, and lying in my own archives. And in 1955 I suddenly went and printed it. What for? Evidently out of a feeling of contradiction, demonstratively to a certain extent. By that time I had been reaching a critical attitude toward the activity of Stalin. I had finally decided to write a novel about the war and begin it with the first days of the war. I wrote the first part of the novel "The Living and the Dead," which was later not included in it for purely structural and artistic reasons, at the end of December 1955, all of January and the beginning of February 1956. This was before the 20th Congress, on the eve of it, there had not yet been either the speech of Khrushchev or all of that which followed it in life and in our hearts. I printed this part of my novel in 1957 as two separate short novels—"Panteleyev" and "Levashov." It included materials that I did not alter or rewrite after the 20th Congress. The way they were written at the time. The secret here was the fact that, in putting off and putting off the deadline for starting the work on the novel about the war, about 1941, I was not doing this by accident. My recollections about that time, my diaries that I relied on first and foremost, were inevitably linked with an internal re-evaluation of a great many things concerning Stalin: readiness for the war, the role of the arrests of 1937 and 1938 in our defeats, much more and much else. The diaries were written during the war. The novel was thirteen or fourteen years removed from them. The diaries that I considered for the novel were somehow different than I had remembered up to then, they were becoming a denunciatory document in relation to the usual and extant evaluations of the indisputable merits of Stalin at all times, including on the eve and at the beginning of the war. Getting into the novel, I re-evaluated Stalin for myself more and more, his role, everything that came from him. I could not, did not want to and was unable, all together, to write about 1941 without this.

Obviously, I should stop here in this part of my manuscript before going on to what I conditionally call "Stalin and the War," in which I will investigate my own feelings and thoughts and the feelings and thoughts of many people with who I spoke about this topic.

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## OGONEK Critic Takes on Conservative Writers Ivanov, Prokhanov

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18-25 Jun 1988 pp 13-15

[Article by Natalya Ivanovna entitled: "Crossing The Swamp"]

[Text] After the publication of A. Platonov's novel "Chevengur," a novel which is profoundly innovative both in content and form and is definitely not an example of the easily digested fiction for which our reader, corrupted by many years of massive flow of mediocre works, is still greedy, the editors of the journal received a letter. "...Dear writer A. Platonov!" wrote a reader. "Why does such a respectable journal as DRUZHBA NARODOV print such a piece of utter nonsense and hack-work??? In the third issue for 1988, I read in the novel "Chevengur," '...and he shod his horses with bast sandals to keep them from sinking....' It is obvious that the author knows absolutely nothing about either horses or bast sandals. First of all, how can you put a bast sandal on a hoof, when the shapes of the two are so different? How would the sandal stay on? A horse weighs approximately 450 kg, and with saddle, bridle, and rider, would be over 500 kg. Thus, the pressure on each hoof would be about 125 kg. Under such a weight, a foot with a sandal would certainly sink into the swampy soil, and sandals would only make it harder to pull the feet out of the soil. After the first step all the sandals would remain in the swamp. The author and the editors are totally incompetent on this topic. Profoundly ignorant!! In your opinion do the sandals have some sort of quality which allows them to be pulled out of the swamp more readily?? They can only complicate and hinder progress through the swamp. There are former cavalry men around and there is even a cavalry regiment in the vicinity of Moscow. You should have consulted with them."

### How to Shoe a Horse With a Bast Sandal

The writer Platonov died in 1951 and thus cannot reply to this reader. And no matter how I were to try to explain to him the unique poetics of Platonov's magic prose; no matter what I were to say about the grotesque, irony, the writer's special foreshortened perspective, or his unique language and style, I would have difficulty making a dent in this reader's prosaic consciousness, devoid of any understanding of the miracle of artistic transformation. And the brilliant passage, "But the teacher Nekhvorayko shod his horses with bast sandals to keep them from sinking into the swamp and, one desolate night, he occupied the city, driving the cossacks into the swampy valley, where they remained for a long time since their horses were unshod," cannot be translated into the vocabulary of commonplace actions about which you can and should consult with a cavalry regiment.

This was written by an artless reader, so to speak; it is not his fault, but his misfortune that he is aesthetically illiterate. His advice to call a whole regiment in for consultation is suggestive. After all, to this day school literature classes cover the decree on Zoshchenko and Akhmatova. The barracks [1] aesthetic of rigid control over the individual has still not lost its charms for some citizens. Indeed, it seems that it continues to retain its inviting aroma even for some literary men.

Today, no one will blurt out, "I am against your innovations, against restructuring, against 'new thinking.'" Everyone amicably votes "pro," interrupting each other like Dobchinskiy and Bobchinskiy. They try to join in with the general chorus of joyful voices wrathfully condemning the opponents of restructuring. That is the current fashion. And civic valor is heard in joint letters and individual articles. It is true that sometimes, one is moved to doubt the sincerity of the new "subscribers," as V. Petrov pointed out in the newspaper SOVETSKAYA KULTURA. He asked how we are supposed to understand the fact that A. Ivanov, the editor-in-chief of MOLODAYA GVARDIYA, has signed a joint letter calling for "More glasnost, more democracy, more socialism" on the one hand (which, I myself would like to point out, for some reason, neglects to mention the actual pretext—the so-called "letter" from N. Andreyeva in SOVETSKAYA ROSSIYA—N. I.), while on the other hand the April issue of his journal contains a detailed manifesto from an apologist for Stalinism, M. Malakhov. Which of these represents A. Ivanov's sincere views? What a naive question!

But here in front of us, so to speak, is the decisive factor, not a letter signed by many others, nor something published in the journal he edits, but what A. Ivanov personally said to the press, in interviews in the newspaper LITERATURNAYA ROSSIYA (6 May 1988) and the journal NASH SOVREMENNİK (1988 No 5). "We, all Soviet citizens," responsibly announces the writer, "must be 'like-minded' (Ivanov's neologism - N.I.), no matter what our age, profession, or nationality." Judging only from the material published in recent issues of the journal he has edited for 18 years, when A. Ivanov calls on us all to be of one mind with him, he is asking us to be in favor of: S. Kunyayev's (Issue No 8) attempt to discredit the poets of the "war" generation; of the use of coercive techniques against the so-called "quick response organs" demonstrated by V. Gorbachev (No. 7, 1987); of M. Lobanov's massacre of B. Okudzhava's prose (No. 3, 1988); of A. Baygushev's vindictive misrepresentation of the positions of critics N. Anastasyev or S. Chuprin (No. 12, 1987); and of the rehabilitation of Stalin's methods of control, as advocated in a letter written by M. Malakhov.

Sharing his most cherished, painful thoughts with the correspondent from LITERATURNAYA ROSSIYA, A. Ivanov, of course, eagerly describes how he too "suffered" in the years of stagnation. Today, it is the fashion to have suffered, and it turns out that even A.

Ivanov felt the heavy hand of editorial power. When his novel came out in a separate edition, recalls our novelist, some episodes present in the version published in the journal had been cut. Do you think that this disturbed the author? That today he would like to restore what was lost? Nothing of the sort. It's the likes of you and me who will rejoice at the restoration of M. Khutsiyev's film "Ilich's Outpost," devoid of offensive cuts, or who are amazed by the steadfastness of A. German, who would make no concessions to the censors—either the regular censor or extraordinary ones. As the film director said in an interview in VOPROSY LITERATURY, "I am certain that at some point everyone, even the truest artist, has wanted to go along with what was being asked of him. Do you think that Mandelshtam didn't want to go along? He did; just read his poems. But his talent got in the way. Do you think my father didn't want to? Or I? Everyone wants to, but is ashamed. When I think about how I survived all this, I am terrified. After all, for three films I received three severe reprimands. And each time they started proceedings to get me fired. Of these three films, two ('Inspection on the Road' has now been nominated for the competition for the USSR State Prize, while 'My Friend Ivan Lapshin' was awarded an RSFSR State Prize—N. I.) were written off as losses." And everything, both the prizes and the attempts to discredit him resulted from his "stubbornness," in other words, his shame before himself, before his talent, and before others. And what does A. Ivanov think about this matter? "I consider it beneath my dignity to raise a fuss, as is the fashion nowadays, over a lost episode or even a phrase!" What admirable acquiescence?

If one respects the work of the prose writer V. Rasputin, does that mean that one should be of like mind with him in his current loud professions of support for the "Pamyat" society (NASH SOVREMENNİK, 1988, No 1) or his complete concurrence with the ideas in V. Belov's novel "Everything is Ahead of Us," which in Rasputin's opinion has a beneficial effect on the reader (KNIZHNOYE OBOZRENIYE, No 14 1988)?

A. Ivanov, after calling on us all to be like-minded, in the same interview, came out against articles by A. Gelman in SOVETSKAYA KULTURA, and N. Ilina in OGO-NEK. So what sort of like-mindedness can he be talking about? Just imagine A. Ivanov and N. Ilina, A. German and B. Pavlenko singing in unison the glorious song of "high artistic merit" (A. Ivanov's lexicon) about "like-mindedness."

No, no matter how A. Ivanov and A. Prokhanov enjoin us to be their accomplices (the only way out, according to Prokhanov, is to join together in a monolithic system through "national reconciliation," but reconciliation between whom? Between T. Glushkova and D. Likhachev, accused by her of the mortal sin of elitism?), it would be better to look truth right in the eye and, rather than uniting, to fix the boundaries between us. I hope that everyone remembers whose words I am quoting.

By the way, A. Prokhanov, advancing the idea of "reconciliation" in the article "Culture is a Temple, Not a Shooting Range" (LITERATURNAYA ROSSIYA, 1988, 22 January), recently proposed an expanded conception of the basis for this reconciliation. His notion is extremely curious and deserves detailed consideration.

In his new work "Defensive Consciousness and New Thinking" (LITERATURNAYA ROSSIYA, 1988, 6 May), Prokhanov proposes a global conception and moves from literature directly into politics.

As we all remember, when M. Thatcher visited our country, she gave a television interview and in her answers to the questions, insisted that only enhancement of defensive might (atomic power, she emphasized) has made it possible to maintain the peace. This is a completely absurd concept. But one that in this country seems to have found grateful "like-minders." Prokhanov writes that new thinking became possible only after attainment of military strategic parity. In other words, due to the arms race? "Only those who created this megastructure are capable of neutralizing it and slowly disassembling it" today, insists Prokhanov. And who was to blame for the previous confrontation? You say the Pentagon? The military-industrial complex? How naive you are! Nothing of the sort, according to Prokhanov; the ones to blame are various pacifists, ecologists, and religious mystics. It is they, it turns out, who "served the idea of confrontation." A.D. Sakharov fasted, Englishwomen encircled Grenham Commons, there were peace marches throughout Europe—and they all served to intensify the confrontation. This is where the evil was hiding.

In Prokhanov's mind, hostility to "pacifists" has unexpectedly merged with another little idea, also completely imperialistic (let us call things by their right names).

Today a contingent of our troops are leaving Afghanistan. Prokhanov writes, as if he had expert knowledge, that our press has said virtually nothing about the true problems associated with Afghanistan. That is, of course, they have said plenty about them and very passionately too, but in their apartments, at home in their own kitchens. It is true that we have had writers extolling the Afghanistan campaign and the first and foremost among them is this same Prokhanov, who has already succeeded in publishing two novels devoted to the war in Afghanistan. The first of these was published in 1981. Thus in Prokhanov's euphemism, "We have said virtually nothing about this," the convenient word "we" does not refer to him personally. Yet, even today, when the Afghan drama, a war which lasted twice as long as World War II has been submitted to profound interpretation and public review, when it has been called "one of the painful legacies of the recent past" (IZVESTIYA, 1988, 8 May), Prokhanov finds justification for it. "...Sending our troops to Afghanistan," he writes, "did not contradict the doctrine, in accordance with which we—the first

and, for a long period, the only socialist society, surrounded by a rampart of imperialist states (in 1979?—N.I.)... were very interested in the birth of structures akin to us in social systems around us." Moreover, Prokhanov openly insists on the necessity for exporting revolution. "And to ensure that our revolution would survive (in 1979?—N.I.), we were compelled to 'free up' a portion of our limited resources for the benefit of the international workers' movement. This refers not only to ideological, financial, and economic resources, but also, of course, military." I don't know about you, but best of all I like the term "of course." He seems to be saying that there was absolutely no alternative. As for the individual fates of our soldiers and officers fighting in Afghanistan, Prokhanov has already organized the future for them and, with their help, for our whole society. In what sort of "positive sense" does Prokhanov propose that the state "use" them? (Let this term be on the author's conscience, which evidently, is permeated with the idea that the state is higher than the individual and can and should "use" those who are "potentially willing to become sacrifices," and if they are not willing, then let them be compelled.)

It turns out that "defensive" thinking—according to Prokhanov—is the same as "new thinking"! As you well know, Prokhanov says with irony, "new thinking" gave rise "not to SP, not to a superliterature dreamed up by pacifistically inclined literary men"—a dig aimed at Adamovich, but to... yes, that's right, don't be afraid—it's as the words have been carved into granite: "New thinking is strengthened and guaranteed by the defensive consciousness."

What kind of a beast is this "defensive consciousness"? And how will it strengthen new thinking? Well, the means are well known—the barracks: to take and disseminate the barracks, first starting with our country. "This defensive consciousness, which, superficially may even appear to be barracks consciousness, contains and preserves a great many precious elements." It is true that Prokhanov does not specify what exactly these are. But let us peer into the future that our writer so gallantly promises us. "We will take from the military complex, carefully, one teaspoon at a time, enzymes and cuttings and replant them in a soil where they can grow. To put it crudely," confesses Prokhanov, "we will take them out of the barracks, out of the garrison, and put them in civilian soil, where they will take and begin to sprout and bloom."

Did you get it? Did you understand what Prokhanov is summoning you to? "Sprout" and "bloom" is what the shoots of the barracks will do on our soil! But that is not all. If the state can "use" a man, if garrison "flowers" can bloom on our land, then will we stop short of the whole world? "Perhaps this is utopian," dreams Prokhanov, "but I would like to believe that eventually we will have a global military super-high command, consisting of them and us."



Let us catch our breath. The whole world will be under a "military super-high command," not to mention the barracks flowers, sprouting in various universities with their "pacifists!" Can this be the future that humanity has dreamed of for itself?

By the way, Prokhanov's ideas, which he expresses even more openly in an interview in the paper *LENIN-GRADSKIY RABOCHIY* (24 July 1987), were totally supported by the not unknown N. Andreyeva in the same paper (9 October). N.A. Andreyeva is an avid reader of both Prokhanov's "meditations" and his artistic works. Thus, she calls his novel on the war in Afghanistan, "The Tree in the Center of Kabul," "one of the best pieces of literature of the decade." N. Andreyeva subscribes without reservation to Prokhanov's ideas. "I fully share Prokhanov's anxiety about certain signs of weakening in the leadership role of the party, and of intensification of social contradictions. I agree that no good will come to us from compromises in the area of ideology and culture." We no sooner begin the extensive process of democratization of society, than N. Andreyeva who is "of like mind" with A. Prokhanov, begins to pine for the lost order. "I sometimes think that they must have been sincere in believing," she says adopting Prokhanov's indignation, "that without rigid centralization in control over social and economic processes, without ideological and political consolidation based on principles of market economy, we would not have been able to create modern industry in the shortest time possible." Thus, with a single stroke of the pen she justifies the sacrifice of millions of people.

In this article, a kind of prologue, to the "letter" in *SOVETSKAYA ROSSIYA*, N. Andreyeva also seconds Prokhanov's nostalgic sighs for the "megastate," and for an "older brother" (the last term comes not from George Orwell, but from Andreyeva's remarks). But in *LENIN-GRADSKIY RABOCHIY*, Prokhanov uses even stronger expressions. Thus, he tries to frighten us by saying that supermen will be created by the implementation of perestroika; he proposes to create a special mechanism to eliminate the "antisocialist effect of perestroika"; and threatens that we will have to move to Mexico or China if we want to live under socialism. Prokhanov also has less global ideas. For example, he asserts that the bourgeois will use television contacts to destroy the socialist ideology of our people. Isn't he advocating a return to the tried and true decades of the "iron curtain?" How much easier it would be for Prokhanov and Andreyeva to live that way. And the main thing was that you didn't have to go anywhere else for socialism. One thing is hard to understand: what kind of Chinese socialism are they talking about—not Maoism? Over there, they have had it up to here with barracks mentality and "strict centralization," in their own "megastate."

#### Slow Witted Lika

As if in response to Prokhanov's order for a utopia with a super-highcommand, the journals have published several anti-utopias: the famous "Brave New World" by A.

Huxley (*INOSTRANNAYA LITERATURA* No. 4, 1988); "Animal Farm" by G. Orwell (*RODNIK*); Ye. Zamyatin's novel "We" (*ZNAMYA*, 1988, Nos 4 and 5); Platonov's "Chevengur," and F. Iskander's philosophical tale "The Rabbits and the Boa Constrictors" (*YUNOST*, 1987, No. 9). All these works create grotesque pictures of the triumph of barracks ideology.

Well, I have listed "anti-utopian" works, what about the utopians? There is only Prokhanov.

It is true that his "utopia" bears a closer resemblance to a universal Arakcheyev regime. And also to the "systematic delirium" of Ugryum-Burcheyev, who wanted to raise his city to the "level of the exemplary" in the following manner: "Each house is nothing other than a municipal unit, with its own commander and its own spy...and each belongs to a unit of ten called a platoon... Five platoons constitute a company, and five companies a regiment. There are four regiments which form, first two brigades, and then a division.. Above the city soars the city-head surrounded by clouds or, in other words, the land and naval forces of the city of Neprekionsk, the commander in chief, who argues with everyone and makes everyone feel the power of his authority." How does this differ from Prokhanov's super-high command? "Nevertheless," bitterly notes the satirist, "when Ugryum-Burcheyev presented his delirium to the authorities, the latter were not only not disturbed by it, but gazed with amazement approaching awe, at the dark scoundrel who wanted to catch hold of the Universe.. These municipal units, these platoons, companies, regiments,—all this, taken together, doesn't it hint at some sort of radiant distance.. However, what kind of a distance is this? What does it conceal? Ba-aa-aracks! replied the imagination with certainty, roused to heroism."

Marx angrily condemned the idea of barracks Communism. The people have paid with irredeemable sacrifices for Stalin's perversion of the idea of socialism in our country, for the ideology of the "accelerating class war," for a barracks attitude to literature and art. It is just this threat of impending barracks Communism that A. Platonov is warning us against in his novel "Chevengur." This writer himself has traversed the difficult route to enlightenment—from an absolute belief in the need for "the terrible judgment of the workers' reprisal," the "violent liquidation of the old 'miserly order,'" and in the need to replace the "unnecessary and harmful philosophy, religion and art" to "bitter repentance," as I. Vinogradov has termed the novel "Chevengur." This Platonov was convinced that the "business of the social revolution is to annihilate the individual," that, for the sake of the triumph of the ideas of global communism, "we will sweep the planets off their courses with fire." This is early Platonov.

To understand the meaning and significance of "Chevengur," to penetrate the complex weave of its ideas, the reader must undertake serious mental labor.

Otherwise, the consumer, corrupted by easily digestible reading, will continue to ask the writer questions like those put by slow-witted Lika in Bunin's "The Life of Arsenyev."

What melancholy! Once more the avenue  
Has been obscured by dust since morning.  
Once more the silver serpents  
Have crept over the snow-drifts.

She asked, "What serpents is he talking about?"

And I had to explain to her that he was speaking of a snow storm, a blizzard.

Slow-witted Lika did not demand that Fet account for the appearance of these mysterious "serpents," but our slow-witted reader of "Chevengur" is certain of his right to tell the writer Platonov what to do and writes an indignant letter to the editor. Here is progress for you.

However, one need only turn to the critical section of certain newspapers and journals, to become convinced that the homegrown claims of slow-witted Lika—along with barracks recommendations in the style of Prokhanov—have been assimilated today as the "new aesthetic."

For example, take the publication of the philosophical tale by Fazil Iskander "The Rabbits and the Boa Constrictors" (Yunost, 1987, No. 9). In Iskander's social grotesque, boa constrictors eat rabbits after first hypnotizing them. But one of the rabbits, Thinker, comes to a surprising conclusion based on observation and experience: "Our terror is their hypnosis. Their hypnosis is our terror. If we overcome fear in ourselves, we will overcome their coercion." The king of the rabbits calmly gives Thinker to the boas to be eaten, since rebellious loners may destroy the unspoken agreement. The king is afraid that the rabbits will start thinking seriously about the fact that their own rabbit happiness is based on lies and theft. The tale can be taken as a grotesque history—especially since the great progenitor of this genre, Saltykov-Shchedrin, is a Russian. This experiment in artistic national self-criticism undertaken by Iskander is important for purifying the social consciousness, and for delivering us from outmoded terror and social hypnosis. Recall that in the story "Old House under the Cypress" (ZNAMYA, 1987, No. 7) Iskander wrote, "Without the desire of those who were hypnotized to be hypnotized, the enterprise would never have been such a great success." The most dangerous thing for the hypnotist is laughter in the auditorium. But "slow-witted Lika" is also very relevant here. The system sarcastically depicted by Iskander is treated by the critic A. Kazintsev (who purposely ignores the most important elements in Iskander's story—laughter, the grotesque and the fantastic) as the creation of an image of "if not social, at least natural harmony" (NASH SOVREMENNİK, 1988, No. 2). The slow-witted critic has reduced the satire to "ridicule" of the people.

Kazintsev looks for the positive hero in Iskander's anti-utopia (how tightly we cling to the canons of barracks aesthetics!) and is very offended when the sole figure who, in his opinion, could take on the function of the *raisonneur* deviates from the "sincere mode of speech" (this in a satire!). The critic angrily condemns Iskander for the genre and then, appropriating the right to speak in the name of the "tragic people," superciliously reprimands the author for deviating from a satiric portrayal of the world. "The author looks at his characters as if from afar, they are alien to him. Without flinching, without heartfelt sympathy, he acknowledges the iron determinism which condemns them to the role of 'aborigines,' 'rabbits.' He has consented to consider history from a standpoint which turns the world into an animal farm, and people into its denizens." In this condemnatory conclusion, written with sanctimonious pathos, everything is turned upside down. The satirist always considers his characters from an alienated viewpoint. Would it not be strange to rebuke Gogol for the absence of heartfelt sympathy in his depiction of bribe-taking bureaucrats in "The Inspector General," or Saltykov-Shchedrin for the fact that Organchik and everyone who joyfully greets his undertaking, and indeed the whole history, is described from an alienated viewpoint? It is more likely that Gogol, Saltykov-Shchedrin, and Iskander too, all experience heartfelt sympathy, but get over it due to the feeling of horror and disgust that comes over them as they describe the abominations of Russian life or Russian history. How did Saltykov-Shchedrin dare to turn it into slapstick? And Krylov with his peasants, bears and asses? Wasn't he too clearly raising his hand against the "people?"

If the reader, and the critic as well, are going to discuss fantasy they must know what fantasy is all about. If they have do not, they will make fools of themselves.

Krylov's fables too, when they first appeared, were treated literally by the severe critics. And for this reason the author was ostracized. "How is it possible for a pike to go with a cat to catch mice?" his contemporaries rebuked Krylov. "How could a peasant hire an ass to guard his garden or another peasant get a snake to tutor his children, or a pike, swan and crab be harnessed to the same wagon?"

Kazintsev's lack of imagination is confirmed by his thoughts on the subject of an illustration in the journal. "For greater clarity, the python is depicted with one of his hands inside the lapel of his service jacket (a gesture which is well known to readers of the older generation, and not to them alone), while the other, in an equally characteristic gesture, is behind his back (hands on a python are of course highly nonsensical, but evidently the illustrator is willing to go to any lengths in his zeal to communicate his bias)." One would like to ask whether possession of the power of speech by a python, rabbits, boa constrictors (not to mention Krylov's ants, dragonflies and the like) do not also induce this kind of indignation in the guardians of literary mores? Doesn't

this critical "method" also dictate that it is high time that Gogol with his Nose, which not only lives an independent life, but actually becomes a state counselor, also be put in his place? And, in general, if individual parts of the human body begin to roam freely through the pages of our national literature, will this not shake the foundations? "Let me remind you," writes Kazintsev, "that F. Iskander's work was published in journal directed at young people and is thus addressed to our most ardent, impressionable and trusting reader. It is easy to imagine how acquaintance with works like this will influence the development of such a reader." One remembers how Zhdanov, in his pogrom against Akhmatova and Zoshchenko, kept harping on the purportedly bad influence they would have on youth. The arsenal of sanctioned arguments, as we see, is not great. Kazintsev has even spotted a socially pernicious intention in Iskander's fable. "To induce people to throw up their hands, and despair of the possibility of the triumph of virtue and justice—is this a worthy literary goal?" One can just see a person, who up to this time has been working actively, reading Iskander's fable and lying down on the sofa never to arise, having lost faith in goodness.

The March issue of NASH SOVREMENNİK for 1988 published a review by Vyacheslav Sakharov of the story by S. Antonov, "Vaska." Ignoring the aesthetic qualities of the work (in which again a very important role is played by laughter and satire), and digressing from Antonov's story to discuss matters of principle (and this is just what he intended all along; Antonov's story serves only as a pretext for expressing his own secret thoughts), Sakharov writes, "I do not want to get involved in the fruitless argument which has so been so persistently thrust upon us, to the effect that in our time we built socialism 'in the wrong way,' fought 'in the wrong way,' etc."

Kazintsev's and Sakharov's positions are identical.

A short digression: I am not saying that Iskander's fable or Antonov's story "Vaska" are without faults and should not be criticized. Absolutely not. I do not want to be like M. Lobanov who, in his article "History and its 'Literary Version,'" delivers invective addressed to B. Okudzhava in a coy prologue in which he explains that he could "criticize" certain pseudopatriotic authors, but proudly refrains from doing because he does not want to "give succor to the enemy, by attacking those on our side" (MOLODAYA GVARDIYA, 1988, No 3). No, of course Lobanov cannot attack our "own side" due to social considerations, which he was the first to put so clearly. One appreciates his openness. But, B. Okudzhava, who he condescendingly refers to as "the poet-songwriter," is evidently not on our "own side," so he can act toward him however he wants, distort his subject matter, chop up his text, and portray him as an antipatriot. (It is no accident, Lobanov implies, that one of Okudzhava's heroines is Polish and another French.) I must confess, that here I am reminded of Pushkin's

Cleopatra, a full-blooded Egyptian and the gypsy Zemfira, not to mention the fact that Mariya Kochubey was Ukrainian... Oh no, the devil put this thought in my head, it's best not to think about it or we'll have to consider Pushkin an antipatriot too.

Unlike M. Lobanov, I do not divide authors into "our side" and "the other side," but into the talented and the untalented. And even the talented may encounter artistic problems.

Thus, in my view, the critics did not accept the works of F. Iskander and S. Antonov, not because of artistic shortcomings, but because the writers unambiguously explained that we "tried to build socialism the wrong way" and achieved the "wrong" results, and in our time this led society to develop a strong desire to rebuild what had been built so badly.

But these critics insist that it is not necessary to redo anything. "Let well enough alone," asserts V. Sakharov, developing the metaphor of the Metropolitan of Moscow, who said people go on and on with what they have, they are in no hurry to escape and we don't need anything else. What was built in the 30s - 50s, in the critic's opinion, does not need to be revised.

One might ask, Who is more concerned about the people? Those who analyze the past, or those who accuse the former virtually of being against the people, of being "alienated" from the simple folk, and who do everything in their power to oppose the demythification of the past? Evidently the process of painful reinterpretation moves the latter only to an attitude of ironic ridicule. "It seems as if everywhere these days and in literature too, the time has come for reminiscences," says V. Sakharov ironically. "In general this phenomenon is curious in itself, and even strange, since the problems of today are urgent enough to put people off reminiscence." Such as what? One hears in these words an echo of N. Andreyeva's irony in LENINGRADSKIY RABOCHIY. "One would think that we have no problems today that are more pressing than discussion of the complex and contradictory phenomena of a half century ago." V. Sakharov continues, "This 'retro' style fills our journals and our screens. One person daydreams about the golden Soviet ten dollar piece, someone else about the New Economic Policy and its flexible and abundant market economy." Who is daydreaming? Those who created the epoch of mass repression and terror, of "total" collectivization and "purges," executions without trials, and rigged judicial proceedings, the epoch of violence and coercion on an unheard of scale? And yet NASH SOVREMENNİK condescendingly calls all this historical agony "an emotional tempest roiling the surface of disturbed memory."

The simplistic barracks aesthetic is the product of an attempt to annihilate a work of literature at any cost, distaining neither misrepresentation of the text, nor distortion of the author's position. But concealed behind this "aesthetic" is an even more ambitious goal. This is



an attempt to discredit at any cost a movement in literature and art, which includes, in spite of the differences in artistic conception among them: Iskander's anti-utopia, S. Antonov's stylized parody, the psychological novels of A. Rybakov and V. Dudintsev, the "new historicism" of A. German and the tragic grotesque of T. Abuladze.

Thus, two types of memory exist for the critics who today are trying to tell the writers how to shoe their horses. They welcome with open arms, for example in *NASH SOVREMENNİK* No 4, the return of memories of how good everything was in the remote past. ("There will be fine huts with old-style carvings, clean washed pine stoops, and a gay wooden horse will fly above the tarred huts, as in the old days.") But, for some reason, bitter memory—of the recent terrible past—finds no shelter or support.

However, despite the ironic ill-wishers, art and society as a whole are analyzing the past with increasing depth. The return of memory is a process no less painful than the process of "mankurtization" that deprives a person of memory, turning him into a slave. Our society has still not devised a guarantee to protect us against "mankurtism."

#### Rehabilitation With Reservations

Dmitriy Urnov has also submerged himself in reminiscences. In the journal *LITERATURNAYA UCHEBA* (1988 No 2) he recalls what he terms the "excommunication of Pasternak." He, it turns out, has a very clear memory of this "episode," as he terms it. Did it evoke outrage, indignation, or at least embarrassment in this philologist, who in those days was a very young man indeed? Nothing of the sort. "What happened in the course of this 'excommunication' evoked in me a single question: why so crude and unconvincing?" Nor is Urnov able to restrain himself from a political hint. "The only thing that could save him was a scandal and a major scandal."

The logic being foisted on the reader goes as follows, the novel is extremely weak, the author needs to save it, so he contrives a scandal with *NOVYY MIR* and next thing you know the whole world has heard of him! Pasternak was expelled by the writers' union, Semichastnyy called him foul names from every possible tribunal—and we are expected to believe that Pasternak contrived it all in order to save his weak novel!

But today the novel has been published. Finally it has become accessible to everyone and everyone is free to read it and decide whether or not it is indeed an "anti-Soviet" novel, and whether its author libels our system. I am using the terms they used then, which caused the then young Urnov to wrinkle his nose and say "crude" and unconvincing."

Today, Urnov is fully mature and himself has attempted to do the same thing, but, as it must undoubtedly seem to him, more elegantly and convincingly.

After all D. Urnov is, at any rate, a cultivated man. But what a strange thing has happened: the minute a man begins to serve untruth, he loses that "shame" which A. German spoke of, and thus he loses all his cultivation.

What purports to be a study of a literary hero is cleverly replaced with a value judgment (and here the character is evaluated as if he were a live person). Yet, it is hard even to call Urnov's name-calling ("lucky baby doll with grey hair," "superficial spirit") value judgment. In my opinion, in his understanding of the hero, this scholar is no different from the porter Markel (one of the characters in the novel, who after the revolution became a resident agent and boorishly insulted his former masters). D. Urnov's name calling appears now to be a slightly edited version of Markel's insults, "dumbbell," "chicken spawn."

And yet he is not ashamed! These people have no shame about anything!

Prokhanov, for example, inserts a nice metaphor into his article. "Today," he says, "values are being immersed in the acid of social self-consciousness and those which turn out to be false, ersatz will dissolve," while all the "true values will survive intact." But here is a quote from Zamyatin: "There are clay ideas and there are ideas which were cast in gold or our precious glass to last an eternity. And to determine what an idea is made of, we need only let a drop of strong acid fall on it" (the novel "We"). This is a suspicious coincidence in writers with such different styles, levels, and ideologies, is it not?

But in as much as the anti-utopian Zamyatin created this metaphor exactly 68 years before the utopian Prokhanov and formulated a great deal more neatly (one need not "submerge" them, all that is required is a "drop" of acid!), then priority must be given to Zamyatin.

If we let fall a drop of the acid of common sense on the current ideas of the "like-minders," we will see something strange. In the vapors of the stagnant swamp, we can make out the shimmering outlines of already-made barracks society. To speak more plainly a labor camp. This is why they are threatened by Pasternak, Bek, Dudintsev, Iskander, Sergey, Antonov, Aleksey German. This is why they are trying to isolate them from the reader and viewer with critical "barbed wire."

But before our eyes it begins to rust and disintegrate.

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**Khabarovsk Kray Official on Ecology-Motivated  
Public-Government Conflict**

18300351a Moscow KOMSOMOLSKAYA PRAVDA in  
Russian 16 Jun 88 p 1

[Article by Nikolay Danilyuk, chairman of the Khabarovsk Krayispolkom, delegate to the 19th Party Conference: "The River and People"]

[Text] With ecological conflicts you don't surprise anyone today. The pathology in nature has become noticeable even in the Far East, where the taiga seemed boundless, and the Amur—eternal. During the years of development of the kray, the main part of the coniferous forest in accessible places was taken out, and the fish reserves of the Amur were significantly undermined. Settlements have remained along the deserted shores for which those who felled the forest and caught the fish.

Recently many krayispolkom officials, having set aside all matters, have analyzed the ecological situation and met and talked with people. We felt that our own conflict is coming to a head. One of its reasons is the preparation for the construction of nitrogen fertilizer plant on the Amur.

A new city is needed in the kray. To develop production in Komsomolsk-na-Amur and Khabarovsk further is impossible. How do cities get started? From a large enterprise. To build in a new place is ten times more expensive than in a developed one. It is difficult to find interested persons who would not stand for the expenditures. But the Ministry for Mineral Fertilizer Production, to whom we denied permission to build a plant in Komsomolsk-na-Amur, agreed. Specialists reported that the equipment will be ecologically clean; science, too, confirmed these arguments. The selection was made, the decision was adopted, and the city was established. But the statements of the public and the press, the more profound study of analogous manufacturers, and additional calculations led to the fact that the kray attained a revue of the question in the state commission of experts. Now it can be said firmly that there will be no nitrogen fertilizer enterprises on the Amur.

For the first time, we found the strength to break the decision previously taken at the state level, and we put in first place ecology, and not economic activity. And this became possible only with the strong reaction of the public.

In talking with people, I noticed that they are not prepared to always believe my information fully. There is a reason for this. The local Soviets, including the chairmen of the krayispolkoms, were helpers to the departments and economic managers. You see, they, too, responded, first of all, to cubes, tons and meters. And this was sensed by the managers, who always turned to the ispolkom for defense. But here, for example, not long

ago the decision was taken concerning the partial stoppage of the Khor Biochemical Plant because of the incomplete sewage purification—solicitors for the enterprise were not found.

The relations with the departments will remain strained for a long time to come. A great deal of damage has been done, but no one wants to put a kopeck on ecology at the present time. The Far East lumber industry for decades carried out drift floating—the logs were pushed off into the river, and they floated to where they were needed. Cheap for the ministry, but ruinous for the kray. This kind of floating was prohibited. But it is necessary to clear the bays and rivers of the pinetrees and cedars that have become submerged. For this, equipment and funds are needed, but the ministry pretends that the problems do not exist. We are unable to compel it.

We connect many hopes with the transition of the enterprises to cost accounting. But in the matter of the protection of nature, the new style of management will not help. Let us say, prices will be introduced for timber, water and land. The department will not take anything unnecessary, but tries to get maximum use from the timber for which it pays. The situation may become more strained, and already today we must find the forces with which to resist.

I reflected for a long time on the collective letter, which was signed by the representatives of several Komsomolsk plants. In many pages, serious matters were set forth, which demonstrated the deep knowledge of the authors about the state of the river as a whole. But how is one to combine with this the fact that little is being done in their enterprises with respect to the protection of nature. Perhaps this is due to the fact that only the director was always responsible, was scolded and penalized for waste discharges and the violation of routines? In the letter people solidly rose in defense of their native river, but it is a well-known fact that, between the enterprises, water reservoirs have been divided on which large-scale poaching of fish is carried out.

Only then will one be able not to worry about the fate of the Amur and other rivers when brigades, shops, and services will begin to control their production. Not to be afraid to come out against the administration, the glavk, to stop the work process, if the threat of an accidental effluent arises, to equip public detachments to the places of poaching of their own workers. The young people and the Komsomol organizations could manifest themselves in this.

With ecological conflicts you don't surprise anyone today. But, you see, the majority of them break out where the matter has reached the end of one's tether, where the situation is becoming desperate. What we need is a powerful movement that must work in such a way so that this would never be allowed.

But, it would seem, why does the chairman of the ispolkom stand up for a movement which only makes trouble for him? He is scolded from below and from above. I hope that soon this situation will have to change. In the Theses of the CPSU Central Committee a great deal was said about the role of the Soviets of People's Deputies, the restructuring of the work of the ispolkoms lies ahead. The ministries and departments frequently decided questions of economic and social development over our head. But if the Soviet and its ispolkom will become a genuine master, then, first of all, they themselves will not permit anything to be ruined, and, secondly, public opinion will become decisive.

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### **Inadequate Armenian Public Water Supplies Explained**

18300351b Yerevan *KOMMUNIST* in Russian  
19 Jun 88 p 2

[Article by D. Margaryan, candidate of technical sciences: "In the Defense of Water"; first two paragraphs are *KOMMUNIST* introduction]

[Text] About what do our readers write, above all, in their letters and complaints to the editors—about water, surely, about the absence of it. We will cite an excerpt from one such letter. Its author, K. Torosyan, asserts that the notorious schedule for the supply of water, which, by the way, is frequently not observed, is nothing else than a screen behind which the officials of Water Supply and Sewer System Administration and other municipal services conceal their work failures. "I would like," K. Torosyan continues, "to hear the objective opinion of specialists, who are free of departmental interests, about the real state of affairs with respect to water supply, and about ways of overcoming the shortage of water in the republic."

We are fulfilling this request and are calling this article to the attention of our readers.

### **Causes**

With the growth of the size of the population, the increase in the water systems of apartment houses, and the development of industry, the supply of the settled areas of Armenia with drinking water is becoming an acute socio-economic problem. At the present time, all cities, urban-type settlements and rayon centers, where 70 percent of the republic's population lives, have central water supply systems. However, as is indicated by the editorial mail, everywhere a shortage of drinking water is being experienced, as a result of which water supply, as a rule, is carried out in accordance with a schedule. At the same time, according to statistical accountability data, in 1986, out of 48 settled areas with centralized water supply, only in two (Vedi, Krasnoselsk) the actual proportionate expenditure of water for household-drinking and municipal-everyday needs was lower

than the accounting norm. In the remaining places, the per capita expenditures of water either corresponded to the norms or exceeded them. Thus, with the maximum round-the-clock norm of consumption, taking into account the centralized hot water supply of 350 liters per person, consumption in Yerevan was 635, in Razdan—653, Kafan—511, Echmiadzin—546, Oktembryan—514 liters, etc.

For a beginning, let us present the path of water movement from the head installations to the consumer. It is well known that its supply and distribution are carried out by external and internal water supply systems. At present it is practically impossible to determine the losses of water in the external water pipeline network because of the absence of water-measuring registration.

The internal water pipeline system begins at the introduction of the pipeline for the building and serves to supply water directly to the consumer. The total expenditure of water for household and drinking needs is made up of useful expenditure, irrational expenditure, and leaks.

What leads to irrational expenditures is the increase of pressures and the impossibility of their regulation, the accumulation of water during interruptions in the water supply, the cooling of food products with water, etc.

Leaks develop because of the use of defective plumbing and technical instruments and reach 80 percent of the total quantity of the water losses registered in the buildings of all categories. One can judge the magnitude of the leaks on the basis of the water expenditure during nighttime (the useful expenditure of water per inhabitant during this part of the 24-hour period should come to no more than 200 milliliters per hour).

### **Effect**

In 1987 experimental research was conducted in the city of Charentsavan on water use in an apartment house equipped with round-the-clock water supply and with gas water heaters. According to the data of the research, the actual proportionate expenditure per inhabitant amounted to an average of 760 liters during a 24-hour period. But of this volume, only 210 liters were expended for the satisfaction of household and drinking needs. 72 percent of the 24-hour expenditure ran into the wastewater disposal system without use!

Analogous research was conducted earlier in Yerevan in a group of new apartment houses (on Kuznetsova and Mravyan streets), equipped with round-the-clock hot water supply, with a total number of 2,594 persons.

The total proportionate expenditure of cold and hot water here came to an average of 915 liters per 24-hour period per inhabitant. The losses of cold and hot water were determined in the amount of 55 and 20 percent.



In surveyed apartment houses in the city of Yerevan, the proportionate expenditure of water reached 1,200 liters, and in some buildings even more. The losses of water due to leaks fluctuated from 30 to 70 percent.

Such depressing results were also obtained in the study of the developed level and routine of water consumption in other inhabited localities: Echmiadzin, Abovyan, Dilizhan, and Nor-Achin.

From what has been said, one can draw an unequivocal conclusion: The chief reason for the acute shortage of drinking water in the republic is its irrational wasteful use.

In the situation described the conclusion suggests itself. The problem of water supply must be solved not so much through the annual increase of the quantity of water, as much as through its more economical and rational use.

In support of what has been said, we will cite the following figures. From 1976 to 1986 the actual supply of water per capita in the city of Yerevan increased from 570 to 930 liters per 24-hour period, but the inhabitants of the city did not experience positive changes in the state of the water supply.

Moreover, the extensive method of management gave rise to another problem—the problem of water disposal. You see, the water consumption inevitably leads to the necessity of an additional increase of the capacities of the sewage disposal network and purification installations, and perhaps the expenditures of additional material and monetary means.

There is a single conclusion—it is necessary to repudiate the extensive methods of managing the economy and to make the transition to the intensive method, which increases the coefficient of the useful operation of the water supply systems and the reduction of water losses. It has been proved that it is cheaper to economize than to produce more.

The successful solution of this task is possible only through the systematic realization of integrated and interrelated measures of a technical, organizational and economic character.

#### What Is To Be Done?

It is necessary to begin with the technical measures that must be aimed at the improvement of the water pipeline systems, their fitting out with modern equipment and instruments, as well as at the improvement of the technical use of water pipelines. Above all, it is necessary to urgently develop a plan for the water supply of all populated areas with regard to the prospects for their development. Such an acute need for them is called forth by the fact that the water pipeline systems everywhere are in need of radical reconstruction. They do not have

vertical zoning, they are ringed unsatisfactorily, the pipelines are tangled, and frequently their diameters do not correspond to the designed ones.

In order to avoid surplus pressure in the internal network leading to the increase of leaks, the installation of pressure regulators in the building services is required. To reduce the losses of water in the houses with several stories, it is expedient to design and introduce story pressure regulators. In order to improve the calculation of water consumption and the realization of the requisite control over the expenditure of water, it is necessary to install water meters in all services of subscribers, without which the desired result will not be attained. Such a measure is already being practiced in a number of countries.

One of the important technical measures is the development and introduction of progressive systems of water supply in industrial enterprises. It is necessary to secure the complete cessation of the expenditure of drinking water for production purposes if it can be replaced with service water.

Organizational measures consist of the improvement of the structure of water supply management. In order to improve the control of water consumption and eliminate in good time the losses of water in the external and internal water supply, it would be expedient to transfer the operation of the entire water supply management system to the same hands. The "dyarchy" existing at the present time (water management enterprises and the housing operation sector) creates only obstacles and confusion.

In the conditions of water measuring registration, operating norms of water consumption for the available housing, and limits on the release of water for industrial enterprises, are the perfect instrument for the control of water use. In order for the actual water consumption not to exceed the standard quantity, differentiated payment with an increasing rate for overexpenditure should be used in the settlement with subscribers.

Economic measures should be aimed at the successful realization of technical and organizational measures to secure the material stimulation of the personnel of the water supply management enterprises in the presence of the full satisfaction of the demand for drinking water and also its economy through the elimination of losses and rational use.

However, the system of planning and economic stimulation that has developed orients the personnel toward the yearly increase in the realization of water. This is a consequence of the fact that the basic plan indicators of the production activity of the municipal water supply enterprises are the volume of water realization and the balance sheet profit on the fulfillment of which the material incentives of the workers depend. Moreover,

the planning of the growth of these indicators is effected proceeding from the attained level of the preceding year, and not from the necessary quantity of water.

Thus, the existing system of planning and economic incentive not only does not stimulate, but it also impedes the realization of organizational-technical measures aimed at the reduction of leaks and irrational use.

At the present time, a more progressive method of planning and economic stimulation that eliminates the indicated shortcoming is being developed and tested in the Scientific Research Institute for Municipal Water Supply and Water Purification of the Academy of Municipal Services imeni K. D. Pamfilov. The basic principle of this method is the planning of the release of water on a standard basis with regard to rational water demand. The total standard volume of usefully released water is determined as the sum of the standard demand for it for all categories of consumers. The difference between the standard volume of water and the developed actual level shows the possible reserve of the reduction of water expenditure through rational use and the elimination of losses. Planned buildings that are put together by the standard method stimulate the activity of the water supply management enterprises in two opposite directions. On the one hand—the necessity of reproduction for the fullest satisfaction of the necessary quantity of water, and, on the other—every conceivable economy through the reduction of its losses.

The realization of the noted measures is connected with enormous difficulties and requires time and considerable expenditures. However, these expenditures will be significantly less than the losses from the yearly increase of water for the compensation of its losses.

8970

#### **Armenian Goskomstat Official on Impact of Strikes on Enterprises**

18200281b Yerevan KOMMUNIST in Russian  
16 Jul 88 p 2

[Interview by Armenpress correspondent with R. Tardzhimanyan, Armenian SSR Goskomstat deputy chairman: "Contrary to Common Sense." First paragraph is source introduction]

[Text] A tense situation has arisen in the republic's economy. Last week, the collectives of many industrial enterprises, construction and other organizations, did not work. As yet, a normal work rhythm has not yet been restored. As a result of the strikes, the work of many enterprises has been paralyzed and the fulfillment of plan assignments is being undermined. Our Armenpress correspondent addressed Armenian SSR Goskomstat First Deputy Chairman R. Tardzhimanyan with a request to characterize the difficult situation which has arisen.

An especially hard blow, he said, has been dealt to the fulfillment of contract responsibilities. In the past week alone, the plants cooperating with our industrial enterprises have not received products valued at a greater sum than [the shortages] in the first 6 months.

Several tens of thousands of electric motors have not been manufactured, millions of rubles worth of complement products have not been supplied, 800,000 pieces of tricot goods and 276,000 pairs of shoes were not manufactured, as well as over a million square meters of fabric and many other types of products of industrial and social function. All this has had a great effect on the normal operation of hundreds of other enterprises throughout the country.

Let me cite several examples. The production association "Armelektromash" supplies its products to major enterprises in Krasnodar, Khabarovsk, Ashkhabad, to the Ivanovo Auto Crane Plant, and others. "Armkhimmash" is tied by its deliveries with Kievspetskomplektgas and the "Odessaprod mash" association. Among the list of the technical equipment plant's consumers are the "Elektroinstrument" Production Association in Rostov-on-Don and the Biysk Boiler Plant. The Leningrad enterprises "Strommashina" and "Stroyrobot," the heavy crane building plant in Odessa, and the "Strommashina" Plant in Tyumen receive products from the "Gidroprivod" Production Association. Condensers manufactured in Leninakan are sent to the "Mogilev-liftmash" and "Samarkandliftmash" plants and the Kiev Test-Experimental Plant. Yerevan electrical motors are sent to the Maykop Reducer Plant, the Kryukov Ventilator Plant, the Georgiyev Armature Plant, and to the "Permzavodtorgmash" enterprise.

As a result of the shortages of various complement products from the Armenian SSR, the Riga "Radio-tehnika" Association, the Moscow "Rubin" Association, the Minsk "Gorizont" Association, the Leningrad Association imeni Kozitskiy, the Zaporozhye "Iskra" Association, and the Simferopol "Foton" Association are not meeting their plans for the output of a number of varieties of television and radio equipment and other products of cultural-domestic function. This list may go on and on. We ask, why is it that today, because of us, tens of conveyers must stand idle beyond the boundaries of our republic, and workers must suffer material loss?

We must not forget that around 60 percent of the republic's industrial products are today produced at enterprises and associations operating under conditions of full cost accounting and self-financing. Part of them were in a difficult financial position before, and as a result of the strike this position has in fact become hopeless.

The strikes have dealt not only direct losses, but have also seriously disrupted the entire reproductive cycle of work, whose restoration has been extremely hindered.

[Question] Yet there are collectives which have shown conscientiousness and discipline during these days...

[Answer] Yes, it is comforting to see that many understand the futility of the strikes and refute them, continuing to work normally at their enterprises. Even on the most tense day—7 July—most of the workers and employees of the republic's industry, as well as the labor collectives of many other sectors of the national economy, did not leave their work stations. It is characteristic that the work rhythm is disrupted, as a rule, in those organizations where a large number of economic and social difficulties and unsolved problems have accumulated.

[Question] We know that Armenia receives industrial production from all parts of the country, a large portion of which is food products. Could you cite some figures?

[Answer] I will speak about the food products whose deliveries touch upon the interests of every republic resident. The fact is that we consume a considerably greater amount of food products than we produce. Every year we import 645,000 tons of grain and over 65,000 tons of meat, which comprises around 40 percent of our consumption. We also import 66 percent of the milk consumed. Let us ask: how would we like it if our brothers from the oblasts in the Russian Federation, the Ukraine, Belorussia, Moldavia, Lithuania, and Kazakhstan undersupplied Armenia with meat, butter, milk and grain?...

I will add that the strikes have created a tense situation also in the republic's construction industry. In the period from 4 through 13 July the direct economic loss in this sector comprised a large sum. Work on the construction of many of the most important facilities of industrial and social-cultural function was paralyzed.

All this inflicts significant loss not only to the national economy, but also to the prestige of the republic and the good name of the Armenian people.

12322

#### **Residents of Georgia Deeply Distressed Over NKAO**

18300022 Tbilisi ZARYA VOSTOKA in Russian  
23 Jul 88 p 3

[Article by Anna Lominadze: "...And Let the Soul Unburden Itself"]

[Text] The subject of this discourse is the letters prompted by the familiar events in our neighboring republics. They were inspired by pain and anxiety, and dictated by the desire to caution against, to alleviate, and to fend-off the irreparable.

Alarmed and attentive, we listen to every word reaching us from Armenia and Azerbaijan. The first thing we do after opening the newspaper is search for bulletins from there. We stop dead in our tracks and prick up our ears when we hear the phrase, "According to our Stepanakert correspondent..."

No, we are not going to publish all of the letters today. Let the writers [of the unpublished letters] reproach the editorial staff and the one who chose these letters for their bias. Their mail will never see publication on these pages. This is because nationalism—the propagation of animosities—is not for our newspaper or for our people. There is a small pile of these letters. They are the picture of ambition, blind with determination. Time passes, and the passion dies down. Perhaps the authors of some of these letters will gratefully think about those who did not rush to get their emotionally-inspired words onto the newspaper pages, presenting them as examples of manifestations of nationalism.

Today, we are concerned with other letters whose numbers are by far greater, which contain not malice—but pain and a feeling of association with what is taking place. People of other nationalities living in Georgia—Armenians and Azerbaijanis, write that this pain and sense of involvement stems from more than their common nationality. At the tops of their voices they declare that they have good neighborly relations and indissoluble ties. What is indivisible cannot be divided! They are linked together economically, politically, and through the personal lives of many many people.

"I never even imagined that I would write to a newspaper. But now I cannot restrain myself. What on earth is going on?" writes A. Arutyunyan from Tbilisi. "When what was happening in Sumgait became clear, my husband—he's Azeri—could not even lift his eyes. We talked and talked—we could not sleep at night. We couldn't believe it. Our son is in second grade. He came home from school and asked, 'Why didn't Khachik talk to me today?' But Khachik, his friend from school, is his best friend. How my heart sank. Why am I writing to you? I want my maternal voice to be heard. Let every Azerbaijani and Armenian mother think about her children—about their futures. What will they have in their hearts—good or evil, peace or hostility?"

This letter is also full of emotions. But of what kind? They are dictated by reason and informed by the maternal concern over the future happiness of her children.

The most important thing now is to listen to the voice of reason. This thought runs through the letters of I. Miroyan (Scientific Production Association "Analaitpibor") and E. Grigoryan (metal-worker and fitter at "Tbilimetallizdeliya") and others, who touched upon this difficult question.



"It seems to me that anyone, whether he's a Lithuanian, Ukrainian, Byelorussian, or an Uzbek, is upset over the events in Nagorno-Karabakh. But for us, Georgians, it is especially alarming," says G. Karsaladze of Kutaisi. "Yes, I am afraid that a fire started by some kind of evil force will singe my land too. I don't have so much as a drop of hatred for the people with whom we have lived for so many years in friendship and harmony—never distinguishing who belongs to which nationality. What is important to me is what kind of person one is—whether or not he is honest and respectable—not what his heritage is. I have thought a lot about how to get out of this situation of conflict under these circumstances. I would like to rely on the fact that people will thoughtfully implement the resolutions unanimously accepted by the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet; that having perceived the logic of those arguments set forth by M.S. Gorbachev at the Presidium, people will reject their prejudices. There is no other way—except to call upon the power of reason for help, and allow the spirit to unburden itself of this debilitating, involuntary disease."

It is a troublesome situation. This is how many, affiliated with it, have characterized and spoken about the problem of Nagorno-Karabakh. Yes, it really is a troublesome situation. If they intensify it with mutual distrust, and an unwillingness to meet each other half-way, somehow they will probably have to give up.

G. Mamedov from Marnuli writes to the editor, "We breathed a sigh of relief after the session of the USSR Supreme Soviet Presidium. And not because, as they say, the question was decided in favor of the Azerbaijanis. No! It was decided in favor of all of us—in favor of our friendship!"

And isn't that really what T. Pogosyan from Akhalkalaki is talking about? "This so-called Karabakh Committee is

muddying the water. I wonder, what kinds of fish does it want from that water? I travel to Armenia every year. I have relatives there. I was recently in Yerevan. I don't know... Perhaps I have a fresh perspective on what's going on there. But for a moment I thought further, having seen a distorted image: hasn't this disaster progressed into a 'plague?' This infectious disease has literally burst into the home. I asked my brother, 'Why are you going to the demonstration? What can you add?' And he answers, 'Everyone goes. It is a matter of our honor.' 'But what does honor have to offer you and others, if it ruins your life? Of course, it was said and promised: Nagorno-Karabakh will be given help. This aid is already coming. The struggle is over these principles? I won't come.'"

"I am sick when I hear about what is going on in Armenia," writes I. Kuznetsov from Tbilisi. "I have lived all of my life in Georgia, where many peoples of various nationalities live, and we simply have an obsession with prima donnas, as much as this unacceptable means helps solve problems. Perhaps it will help. Let the representatives of all of our republics—several persons per republic—go on a volunteer mission to Armenia and Azerbaijan. Let them meet with the working class, the peasants, the intelligentsia, and resolve a few problems. Maybe this will help heal the wounds faster?"

These are good letters. And it is possible that someone will derive some of the value in them. In a higher sense, these letters arose under the influence of the most noble feelings. Feelings, which attempt friendship, brotherhood, sincerity, and love for one's fellow man.

—Anna Lominadze

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